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DOLORES :

A TALE OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISTRESS.

Compiled, Arranged and Edited

FROM

THE JOURNAL, LETTERS AND OTHER MSS. OF

ROLAND VERNON, Esq. ;

AND FROM

CONTRIBUTIONS BY AND CONVERSATIONS WITH

THE VERNON FAMILY,

Of Rushbrook, in Carolina.

By BENJAMIN ROBINSON.

“——— Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall : and that should teach us
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”

New York :

E. J. HALE & SONS, 16 MURRAY STREET.

1868.

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PREFACE.

To critics I have nothing to say in extenuation of aught that appears in the following pages. If they find anything to praise in what I publish therein, I am confident that they will be just to themselves, and give me due credit. If they find anything to ridicule, or to denounce, or to assist them in pointing a moral, I am sure they will make the most of it—they always do!

But to my general readers, I have something to premise; because I think they are entitled to an explanation, and I feel that I have a perfect right to offer one.

It is this: When my friend Mrs. Alice Vernon brought me the manuscripts which I have worked up into a connected narrative, with the request that I would edit them for publication, I appreciated my unworthiness for the labor, but such were my obligations to her that I could claim no right to give her a flat refusal. So I consented to consider the matter.

After some weeks of deliberation I replied, as I thought, in a very positive manner, that I must decline to undertake the work. Whereupon, she demanded my reasons, and I gave them.

I told her that a lack of acquaintance with the parties by whom her husband had been surrounded, and who would be necessary as *dramatis personæ* in the story of his sad life, would forbid my attempting the task; for to give interest to the chronicle, the characters of these persons would have to be portrayed very vividly. Mrs. Vernon overruled this objection by calling the names of each of these parties, and then selecting from our mutual friends others, who, she averred, were in some respects strikingly similar; after which she insisted

that I could take a peculiarity from this, and a peculiarity from that person, and by drawing upon her descriptions and my own imagination, so hit off the personages of the narrative as to preserve a sufficient accuracy and truthfulness to nature.

When I expressed my fear that this suggestion, if acted upon, would give offense, and that persons might be indignant from the supposition that I had caricatured them, Mrs. Vernon ridiculed the idea, and declared her perfect assurance that there is too much good sense in the majority of mankind for any sane person to be so stupidly foolish. I was not satisfied; but then, what is the use of arguing with a woman?

Subsequently, I reminded Mrs. Vernon that it was evident from the MSS. that her husband had been an Infidel, and that to present him fairly, many of his conversations would have to be transcribed, which would reflect, in all probability, great and unnecessary ignominy upon him; while, at the same time, I confessed that the moral of such a book, as that which she wished me to write, might prove hurtful, and would certainly subject me to unkind animadversion from flippant critics. Still Mrs. Vernon was not to be silenced or overcome; but she combatted my suggestion, saying that while the superficial reader might condemn, the profound would approve,—that the moral was, instead of being evil, calculated to elevate, expand, and develop Christian virtues. As for her husband, she said that his misfortunes would shield him from ungenerous and unmerited censure. As for my fear that the fact of having edited such a book would subject me to the suspicion of heterodoxy, she laughed at it, and

taunted me with a lack of moral courage. Then I began to yield—who cannot face the fire of a world's abuse more firmly than a pretty woman's half meant, half pretended scorn?

Put to my trumps, at last I gave my best reason: I had no experience in book-writing, could not do the scene shifting, was not an artist—in a word, had no idea as to how a novel should be worked up for the press; and that, if the book was to be printed with any expectation, even of a respectable circulation, that it ought to appear in the form of a novel: all this I frankly said, and more. Yet Mrs. Vernon persisted in her confidence in my capacity to perform the labor, flattered me a little, and I surrendered.

When I got to work and had nearly completed my labor, I stumbled upon an obstacle to further progress. The description of Mrs. Adams' trial balked me—I could not understand the notes of the medical testimony left by Roland Vernon; and I regarded this as very important. I went to Mrs. Vernon with my distress—she is happy in expedients—and communicated information of the difficulty. She immediately proposed a plan of relief—the one which I adopted:—

“I understand,” said she, “that the same experiments were made for detecting poison in this case as were made in the celebrated Simpson case. I have a copy of Mr. Haigh's report of that trial. Take it; and, with it, and a little cramming in chemistry, toxicology, and medical jurisprudence, you can understand Mr. Vernon's notes of the evidence of Doctors McPherson and Effingham.”

This much of explanation, in advance, I have thought to be absolutely necessary—only a word, or so, more!

If any persons, after reading these Chronicles shall be disposed to condemn poor Roland Vernon for his dearth of Faith, let them recollect that he is yet young, and that his great afflictions may in the end break his stony heart, and direct him, in humiliation, to the fountain of Eternal Truth. When he drinks of the waters thereof, he may emerge from the darkness in which his spirit now dwells, purified and strengthened, and be what he ought to be—a Christian as well as a high-toned Gentleman.

BENJ. ROBINSON

FAYETTEVILLE, N. C.,
October 23, 1868.

P R O E M.

"BACK woman—back! What! Do you come to mock my woe? Do you bring those children here to taunt me with my misfortunes, to make them hate me because I have not provided for their wants?"

"O no! He did not speak thus to you—to you who have loved him so fondly! It cannot be—it cannot be that he reproached you thus—Tell me that you are only in jest!"

"I repeated his very words," sobbed the young woman. "He said more—worse; but I cannot, I must not tell you these things."

"Tell me all, child—tell me all! I cannot bear to hear; but I can no better endure not to hear! I entreat you, I command you to tell me everything!"

"When he spoke so cruelly," continued the younger of the two women, "I fainted; and just as I revived they seized him and started away. He went with them as far as the door; then turned and said in a sad tone that I shall never forget: 'It is not my fault that I have failed, my wife. I have not been unwilling to work for you and for them. But I started wrong—I tried to be honest and at the same time to succeed. I aspired to accomplish an impossibility.' Oh! I cannot go on, mother—I cannot!"

The older of the two, from whose eyes the tears fell rapidly, could only gasp, "Go on! I *must* hear all!"

"Then they carried him out; he struggled and hurled them from him; and rejoined me. Pointing to the children, he said, shaking his head, 'Don't let them know they have an ancestry! Don't let them be gentlemen! Above all things,'

and his voice dropped into a whisper, 'never let them take an oath!' He commenced to say something else, but, I was so excited I could only hear the words, 'TEACH MY CHILDREN TO BE VILLAINS—THEN THEY WILL BE HAPPY!' Oh! mother! mother!"

Saying this, the younger of the ladies, weeping violently, fell into the arms of her companion, who folded her silently to her bosom.

Not very far off were two other women wearing the mourner's garb; while, closer at hand, two sunny-haired boys watched a parent's grief.

The old place, in whose park these women were weeping that afternoon—August 10th, 1868—was the homestead of a Carolina family. It was called RUSHBROOK, and had received its name from its original owner.

Rushbrook was situated on a plateau of thirty acres, which, edged by a forest growth of oak and pine, sloped with a gentle declivity from three sides to the banks of a rapid stream whose transparent waters, flowing through a jagged but glittering bed of sparkling sands and shining pebbles, murmuring a soft melody as they danced over the rugged surface of the uneven channel, rippled on to mingle with the turbulent current of the not distant Cape Fear.

It was reached from C—town, located on the river shore, by a wide turnpike that stretched towards the West and bounded the tract on the South, passing the great gate, from which, through a cedar lined avenue, nestling amid a depth of foliage afforded by the magnolias, oaks, chestnuts and mock orange trees, could be seen a quaint old two and a half story building, once

painted white, and its square sides picturesquely set off with heavy green blinds, but now,—for it had been built nearly three quarters of a century,—beaten and discolored by the peltings of many storms, and shrunken and gnawed by the sharp tooth of Time—the angular roof being covered with moss, and the panes of the odd fashioned dormer windows, that stood out like grim sentinels above the battlements of a fortress, full of the ugly webs that busy spiders had woven during the long days of many a year.

In rear of this building was a large yard, with stables, barns, and other outhouses, shaded by huge mulberries, behind which was a wide stretch of cornfield, the landscape being relieved here and there by luxuriant vines, running with well trained regularity along the firm supports of stout arbors, which were flanked by fruit trees, heavy laden with the rich abundance of a plenteous yield.

In front, between the house and the road, there was a circular park, fenced by a hedge of osage-orange that followed the outer circumference of a wide gravelled foot and carriage way. This park was bisected by an avenue, the guard of cedars, on either side of it, stretching out their limbs, interlacing their branches, and forming a sombre canopy. The great semicircles, into which the park was thus divided, were full of gigantic trees, whose luxuriant boughs and vine clad crests gave a cool retreat of shade and provided a deep seclusion for the inmates of Rushbrook.

This elegant seat was once the home of happiness, the abode of wealth, the shrine of an unbounded and freely dispensed hospitality. But misfortunes had come upon its occupants; and now, alas! the auctioneer's hammer was to ring where Beauty's laugh had resounded.

Rushbrook was to be sold on the morrow; the mortgagee's advertisement was tacked on its gate post; and four women who had loved it in its better days were now taking a last sad look at the scenes of a happiness that had departed.

"Let us go, daughter!" said the elderly lady, after drying the flood of tears that the other's recital had evoked. "I cannot

stay here—the memories revived by these scenes are too painful. Let us go!"

"Shall we call *them*, or leave them behind?" was the inquiry of the daughter, as she pointed to the ladies conversing a short distance off, and at the same time beckoning to her children.

"As you please, dear!"

"Come Mrs. Adams—both of you! We are going. Are you ready?"

"Certainly!" replied the younger, but the sadder of these ladies, hurrying forward to join the group nearest the gate.

The sun was sinking, and the western sky was brilliant with variegated colors; white clouds, drifting over a background of cerulean blue, were rimmed with blended gold and red; long shafts of illuminated silver shot upwards, like mighty columns of moonbeams, resting on the dark horizon, ever and anon lifting themselves to the zenith, as if to light the world, now that the Day-God had abandoned his throne; while sweeping from North to South was a vast expanse of an orange sea, over the surface of which crimson billows were beating like the furious waves of a tropical tempest-tossed ocean at dawn. From this sky there lingered a reflection of light on the roof of the Rushbrook House, and upon the cobwebbed panes of the dormer windows, the sun had wrought pictures of fantastic shapes; the leaves of trees in the park were glistening brightly from the effulgence that was wrapping all nature in its soft embrace; the whole landscape was glowing with a radiant loveliness! While all was yet entrancingly beautiful, she, who was called mother, turned and beheld the gorgeous pageant.

"Dear, dear old Rushbrook!" she exclaimed with great fervor. "How can we leave you? O God! why have we been doomed to so much misery?"

"Alas!" interposed a weak, sorrowful voice. "Alas! that I should have been the cause of this parting. It would have been better to have died than to have brought grief and poverty to my friends!"

"Say not so!" responded the other. "Say not so, my child! We regret the loss of our home; but we are proud of the

act that has rendered the sacrifice necessary."

"And do you still love me, since I was the immediate cause of his incarceration, since to save me you have been forced to surrender your home?"

"How can you doubt it?" was the half pitying, half indignant rebuke.

"You must *remember* that the members of our race count nothing vainly expended that is consecrated to the maintenance of Truth, or that is devoted to the defence of Innocence!"

With these words, Mrs. Vernon turned her back on the seat of her former splendor, and swept majestically into the C—town road.

The sunlight which had played on the roof and illuminated the park, as if sym-

pathising with the noble matron's sorrow, died out utterly, and the sombre gloom of twilight encompassed the landscape.

What sorrow was it that pressed on this stately woman? Who were her companions? Of whom did Mrs. Vernon's daughter speak? who was he that had spoken those bitter words which she repeated? Where was he imprisoned and for what? Why had he uttered that horrible command—"TEACH MY CHILDREN TO BE VILLAINS?"

It will be the Editor's effort to answer these questions in the following chapters.

Each reader, after their perusal, must determine for himself whether Roland Vernon was a man, or a devil.

DOLORES.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

IN the afternoon of the fifteenth of June, 1853, a boy of fifteen waited impatiently in the middle of the cedar-arched avenue at Rushbrook, looking eagerly towards the house, watching, it seemed, for the coming of some one who had failed in the punctual observance of appointment.

There was something attractive in the appearance of this youth. His figure was girlish, and was attired plainly but neatly, in garments of a light grayish material cut in a fashion well adapted to his age and form. His face was a pleasant one, with well chiselled features, and lit up by an eye of tender blue that glanced now and then with a mingled volume of fire and gentleness. Crowning his well shaped head was a crested wealth of golden curls, which now glistened in the sunshine that was creeping through the interwoven boughs overhead; and these curls were nestling in wavy profusion around a fair and delicately moulded forehead.

He waited until his patience was exhausted, nervously keeping his eye on the front steps of the house. At length he threw himself on the ground with an exclamation of petulance, and, to beguile the time, gazed at the sun which was sinking behind a pile of cloud banks, marking and admiring the golden splendor of the burnished heavens, all aglow with lovely tints, and tapestried with bright cloud pictures; and then, when these had vanished, he yawned, and stretched himself, and looked again towards the house.

Just as he directed his gaze towards the

door, out tripped a maiden on the walk; she paused a moment and then bounded towards the youth.

"So you have come at last, Belle! I thought you never would get tired of staying in there with those grown folks. Do you know that I have been here an hour waiting for you?"

The youth put on an air of offended vanity when he said this, and then heard her response in dignified silence.

"You are very impatient, Roland," she cried, with a little frown, "but I dare say you have been enjoying yourself well enough without me all the while. You only pretend to be anxious to have me with you."

Master Roland Vernon protested that he had missed Miss Belle Woodruff very much—so much that it was impossible for him to convey the slightest idea of the magnitude of the deprivation which her absence had occasioned.

"But, never mind, now that you have come," he continued, "for your presence confers such a pleasure that I should be a brute if I reproached you for your delay, that has made it even sweeter."

"Oh! when did you learn to coin such handsome compliments?" And Belle dropped him a mock courtesy.

"While you were in the house pretending to be so demure!" he answered, giving her arm an impudent pinch.

"O Roland! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? I know what's the matter—you are jealous of Uncle Leigh! What a boy—jealous of his own grandfather!"

"No, I am not," replied Roland, flaring

up, and then laughing merrily at the idea, "but I wish you wouldn't always spend your time with mother, and grandfather, and the rest, when you come to Rushbrook. It's seldom enough that you come anyhow!"

"And, if you want to see me, why don't you come over to the Meadows? You are a pretty fellow, I know! to expect me to visit you. I can tell you, sir, I am not in the habit of calling on my beaux."

"Now that grandfather is so sick, I cannot leave Rushbrook long enough to go to the Meadows. He wants me with him all the time, when no company is here to see him. That is why I can't go to see you, and why I am so greedy of your company when your father brings you to Rushbrook."

"And it was because your grandfather is so ill that I staid in the house, Roland. Father, who is his brother-in-law, tells me that the poor old gentleman will soon die; and, as I have always been one of his favorites, and have received many kindnesses from him, I thought I ought to stay and converse with him as long as he seemed to desire to have me."

"Why, Belle! Who would have imagined that you were so considerate? Not I, certainly! It is too late now to go to the Holly Spring. Your father said we must not be away when he gets ready to start; so we will sit down here and talk until he comes. Pshaw! There he comes now!"

Just as Roland Vernon spoke, a tall, handsome gentleman stepped out of the house and advanced to the gate. This was General Walter Woodruff, an officer of the Carolina Militia, and a lawyer by profession. He was a gentleman of wealth, a planter as well as an advocate, and held an honorable position in the county. But for too great a fondness for wine, he might have attained great eminence, as his talents and education were of no mean order. As it was he was constantly deteriorating, and was only kept from utter degradation by his fondness for his only daughter, Belle, who was as spoiled as she was beautiful. James Leigh, the maternal grandfather of Roland Vernon, married a sister of General Woodruff; but Mrs. Ver-

non was the daughter of a subsequent marriage.

This afternoon the General was sober; and, apprehending the early decease of his brother-in-law, he had brought his daughter with him to see the feeble old man. He was now ready to return to the Meadows, his elegant seat about two miles south of Rushbrook.

"Come, Belle! I am ready; and Roland looks as if he felt very tired of you. She is a great chatterbox, Roland; and, if she ever gets married, she will tease her husband to death."

Roland laughed pleasantly; and squeezing Belle's hand, as she got into the carriage, he bid the General and his daughter, "Good evening."

"Pa, I wish you wouldn't slander me to my sweethearts!" she said with a saucy toss of her head, after they had driven away from the gate. "If you tell him that I am a tease, he'll take fright and won't pop!" And she added, with a shudder at the thought, "That would be dreadful!"

"Humph!" grunted the general. "At that already, are you? Why, you little minx! you are as bad as your mother was. She made me *pop*, as you call it, before she was fifteen. How like her you are, Belle!"

With this the General fell to musing; but his daughter interrupted him with the retort,

"Well, I'm sure I will be fifteen in December; so, as Ma did before me, I have got a right to catch as many beaux as I want, and I shall."

The General smiled when she proceeded in an earnest tone,

"Roland is *such* a nice fellow! Don't you think so, Pa?"

"Certainly he is, my daughter," he replied right heartily. "He is a clever boy—indeed, he could not well be otherwise with such blood in his arteries."

"What do you mean by that, Pa? You are always talking of blood and things. What has blood to do with Roland's being clever?"

"A vast deal, my daughter. A man is constrained by the blood that he has inherited from his ancestors. You can't

make a silk purse of a sow's ear, nor a sow's ear of a silk purse."

"Did I ever! There you go talking of silk purses and so—and things, as if I knew any thing about them. Please don't try to tease me, Pa; but tell me why Roland can't help being clever."

"Because his father is Charles Vernon; and because Virginia Leigh, that used to be, is his mother. There, now!—is that a satisfactory reason, puss?"

"No, sir, it isn't," she replied with a pout. "But are the Vernons and Leighs so much better than any other people?" she continued.

"Not any better than the Woodruffs, Belle; but then that boy Roland comes from a good stock. The Leighs and Vernons were English Royalists, and stuck to the Stuarts from the day that James I. ascended the united throne of England and Scotland until Prince Charles was whipped at Culloden."

"What did they do then—desert him?" asked Belle, growing suddenly interested in the genealogical history of her sweet-heart.

"Desert him! No, girl! They fled with him, linked their fortunes with his, made their escape with him to France. James Leigh's grandfather was one of his most trusted followers, as was old Roland Vernon."

"And who was old Roland Vernon?" Belle asked impatiently.

"He was Roland's great-grandfather. He had two sons, Charles and Louis, the one ten, the other twelve, when they went with him to France. Charles afterwards, old Roland having died in the meantime, upon growing to manhood emigrated to Virginia, having found after a short stay in England that the old family manor near Bristol, which had been confiscated, could not be recovered."

"And what became of Louis?" asked the General's fair inquirer.

"He accepted the proffered assistance of a distant relative of his mother, and purchased a Cornet's commission in the British army. Afterwards he fought on General Wolf's staff at Quebec, and distinguished himself by his bravery. After the declaration of peace he made his way

through the wilderness, by Ticonderoga, to New York to sail for England. Losing his path he came upon the Walloomscoik Valley in the present State of Vermont. Upon getting back to London he sold his commission, and returned to America, purchasing a large grant of land on the Walloomscoik River, which he subsequently colonized with a number of Puritans from Massachusetts."

"So Roland is descended from one of those horrible old Puritans! I declare I won't speak to him again!" interposed Miss Belle, with a curl of the lip.

"No—no! You don't understand me. He was the lord of the manor, the Puritans were his dependents. Afterwards, Louis Vernon commanded a regiment in the Revolutionary war, and fought against George III. He had several sons, three of whom were old enough to serve in that struggle. Charles Vernon, Roland's father, was his youngest son, and was born in 1798, after his father's death."

"Well, now you have told me all that, tell me how he happens to be here in Carolina. Who would ever have thought Mr. Vernon was a Yankee?" said the young lady, opening her bright, black eyes, very, very wide.

"He grew up to manhood in Vermont, and, finding that the social conditions existing there were not suited to his taste, as there was a very large infusion of Massachusetts Puritans in the population of the village in which he lived, he moved first to Virginia, and then to this county."

"But you have given me a perfect history of Louis Vernon, and his descendants; and have not told me what became of Charles, and of the Leighs. Since you have determined to amuse me with a story, tell me of all the characters," was the very reasonable remark of the General's listener.

"As I said, Charles came to Virginia, married, and died there, leaving a large family. James Leigh's father came over to this state with some Scotch McDonalds and settled on the Cape Fear. After marrying my oldest sister, his son James—the grandfather of Roland Vernon—married the only daughter of Charles Vernon of Virginia."

"Well?"

"And her daughter Virginia married her

second cousin, Charles Vernon, junior. Your friend, (or shall I call him sweetheart?) Roland, is the only son of that marriage.—See! Here we are at the Meadows!”

“And I am very glad—I am sleepy!”

“Sleepy, you little torment! Why I have been telling you about your sweetheart’s antecedents to entertain you; and now that I have gotten you home without tiring you, audacious little wretch that you are, I am to be told that you are sleepy. ‘How sharper than a serpent’s tooth,’ and so forth!” cried the General in a mock rage.

“Oh! Then I must pretend that I have been interested when I hav’n’t! Is that your requirement?” and she laughed and ran away into the house.

“The General followed his daughter, never dreaming how much he was spoiling her; and, overtaking her in the hall, stamped his foot, and exclaimed,

“Roland Vernon need’n’t ask me for you. I shall positively refuse to let so good a fellow be victimized by such a mad-cap as you are. I will; indeed, I will!”

Belle laughed and vanished: So did General Walter Woodruff.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN General Woodruff drove away from the gate at Rushbrook, Roland looked after the carriage, in which Belle was being carried away from him, for a few minutes, until it was out of sight; and then he walked slowly into the house. Entering the front door he was met by his mother, who stepped out from the dining-room where she was superintending the preparation of the tea-table; she gave him a caressing pat on the head, and said,

“Poor Roland! Belle has gone and left him sad. Never mind, my son; life is not so short but you will have plenty of opportunities to see her again.”

“Now, mamma!” he always called her mamma, although he was quite a large fellow for his age, “Now, mamma, please don’t tease me. I like Belle very much; but not

so much as you think I do. She is not my sweetheart, as you suppose.”

“Indeed!” said Mrs. Vernon, with astonishment. “Oh! I thought she was—I thought you confessed that!”

“Shall I go to grandpa?” he asked, with an evident desire to divert his mother’s mind from the other subject. “You know, I’ve been down all the afternoon.”

“Yes, dear. He will be pleased. Your grandpa is very fond of young people.”

Roland mounted the stairway and entered a room to the right. In this elegantly and comfortably furnished upper chamber, with its windows opening on the eastern and southern sides of the house, the odor freighted breezes which swept over the park stealing in and filling it with fragrant atmosphere, lay, in a voluptuous bed in the northeast corner, propped with pillows, the attenuated form of a disease-worn invalid.

By his couch sat Doctor Effingham, the family physician, conversing cheerfully in a low tone. They had been discussing a number of unimportant topics before the boy entered; but when his steps were heard approaching the Doctor rose to take his leave.

“It’s nobody but Roland,” said Mr. Leigh, “so don’t hurry away. My son, I wish to speak to the Doctor alone for a few seconds!”

Roland retired immediately; and the old man, raising himself and fixing his gaze steadfastly on the physician’s face, said in a weak but deliberate tone,

“Before you retire, Doctor Effingham, I desire to ask you a question; and I would not have you disguise the truth. I infer from your anxiety about me, although I am stronger to-night, that I am rapidly approaching dissolution. I do not fear the ordeal of Death, and, having spent my three score years, I have very little desire to live. But I wish to know how much longer I will live. I would defer to the last moment the attention which must be bestowed upon important concerns, demanding my best faculties of mind.”

“Frankly, Mr. Leigh,” responded the physician, after some slight hesitation, “I despair of your recovery. You may last

three weeks; you may not last a week. Certainly, I would advise you not to postpone beyond a very few days, any necessary preparations for the Future.

"Thank you, Doctor; thank you for your candor!"

"I have one or two more visits to make to-night; so you must excuse me. Good evening." And saying this the physician rose, and, calling Roland, took his departure.

Doctor Effingham was a gentleman of superior talent, and, although only thirty-two or three years of age, was deeply versed in the lore of his profession. Like most members of the Medical Faculty he was a Materialist; and had very little of the Spiritual in his composition. When Mr. Leigh spoke of important concerns to be attended to, the Doctor thought there was to be another death-bed repentance, and his lip twitched with an ill suppressed sneer.

"So James Leigh is going to recant at the last moment. Bah!"

Such was the Doctor's remark, muttered almost inaudibly, as he mounted his horse and rode away from Rushbrook.

"No; that can hardly be the case," he thought subsequently, "he is a man of too much mental strength to grow weak even in apprehension of death. But what else can it be? He has written his will, for I witnessed it!"

Mr. James Leigh was of the old school; the last of his name. From his father he had inherited, while still quite a youth, an ample fortune, consisting of lands, houses, stocks, and slaves.

To dispense his hospitality with a lavish generosity, to prove a benefactor to the poor and sorrowing, to give an example of virtue and benevolence to his fellows, to make his dependents happy by ameliorating their physical and moral condition, and to preserve the honor of his race from all blemish: these had been the chief aspirations of a long and useful life. One other ambition, however, was coupled with these aims: He desired to perpetuate the name of the family which was once so illustrious; and to have the pure rich blood of the Leighs, which had pulsed daring re-

solves from stout hearts to the minds of heroes long dead, and that had fed with its strong nutriment, nerves that had never faltered in the presence of any perils, thrill again through the arteries of a new generation, no whit inferior to the brave old family Knights of Richard's and Henry's days. While yet a young man, cherishing this desire, he married a charming lady, the sister of General Woodruff; but at the moment when his wish was about to be gratified, his wife died, and left him widowed as well as childless. Afterwards, he married again,—a daughter of Charles Vernon of Virginia; but, much to his disappointment the only issue of this marriage was a daughter, at whose birth the tenderly loved wife died in childbed.

Mr. Leigh was a fatalist; and, believing that he was destined never to have a male heir, centered all his affections on his infant daughter, who grew to womanhood, beautiful, talented, and, in every respect, worthy of her distinguished lineage,

When Charles Vernon of Vermont, a first cousin of her mother, came to C—town to live, he was frequently entertained by Mr. Leigh; and thus was encouraged that intimacy which ripened into love, and had its full fruition in the marriage from which young Roland Vernon was sprung.

Col. Charles Vernon was a distinguished member of the C—town bar, a man of large wealth and influence at the time this narrative begins. He lived at Rushbrook, the old family seat of the Leighs, which had been built by James Leigh, his wife's grandfather; and which was given to his wife upon her marriage as a bridal present from her father. Mr. Leigh had lived with the Vernons ever since their marriage; and he, their son Roland, and themselves, made the happy family group that had been accustomed to sit under the dear old roof-tree at Rushbrook.

Happy years, all of them had spent, in this elegant abode. But a shadow was hovering over it now. The wings of the Angel of Death were darkening the horizon that bounded their vision. James Leigh was slowly but surely, nearing the eternal goal.

CHAPTER III.

A week was passed by Mr. Leigh with less discomfort than usual; and Doctor Effingham encouraged the inmates of Rushbrook by his rather favorable comments on the change in his patient's condition. On the 26th of June, however, a return of unfavorable symptoms alarmed Mrs. Vernon and she sent in haste for the physician.

When Doctor Effingham came in obedience to this summons he soon saw that there were unmistakable indications of a diminishing life force; and he immediately informed Mrs. Vernon of his apprehension, and advised a speedy attention to such matters as would require mental exertion on the part of her father.

She sent to town for her husband, and directed the messenger to go for the Reverend Mr. Adams, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church.

A couple of hours later, Doctor Effingham, who remained with his patient, again felt the flickering pulse, and, administering a stimulant, prepared Mr. Leigh for communicating with his friends, knowing that the sooner this effort was essayed the more certainly it would be satisfactorily concluded.

Mrs. Vernon stood weeping at the window, her hand resting tenderly on the curly head of her son, and herself supported by the strong arm of her husband, who, much affected, though unused to manifesting his emotion, was endeavoring to calm her for the ordeal which he perceived to be imminent. The old minister stood by her and kindly offered the consolations of the Church, and tendered the comforting promises of the Gospel, in the hope that these would assuage her grief.

"Oh! Mr. Adams!" she sobbed bitterly, "I fear that Father is still a disbeliever; and that these pledges of the Redeemer's Love, are without virtue to soothe my sorrowing. If he could only die a Christian, if I could hope for a reunion up there, the suffering of this hour would not have to be endured. Oh! oh! oh!"

And she became hysterical and sobbed violently.

"Restrain your grief, my wife. If you are not calm you will distress him sorely. Be braver!" whispered Col. Vernon, bending a pitying and sympathising glance upon his wife.

Doctor Effingham beckoned them to the bedside. The weak old man stared at them, and smiled faintly.

Leaning over him, striving to repress the unbidden tears that came in torrents to her eyes, his daughter said in a whisper,

"Father, Mr. Adams has come to see you. Wouldn't you like to have him pray with you? I sent for him for that purpose."

This aroused the old Cavalier; and, offering his thin hand to the preacher, and welcoming him with that courteous dignity which distinguished his intercourse with his kind, Mr. Leigh said politely to this man, who had, for years before, never entered that house, or exchanged a friendly greeting with its master,

"Mr. Adams cannot but know that I am not a believer in the efficacy of prayer. My views about religion have been firmly fixed for many years, and I see no reason for changing them now. Indeed, my confidence in their correctness has never been more unshaken."

The Puritan lifted his hands with holy horror and gazed upon the dying Infidel, with a mingled look of astonishment and repugnance. He had been taught that disbelievers always recant on their death beds. Doctor Effingham smiled a happy smile of satisfaction and stepped back a few paces: he saw one man who could die by his unfaith. Mrs. Vernon wept aloud. Col. Vernon wore a grave look. Roland was blank with amazement.

"But," continued Mr. Leigh, "if my daughter thinks it will afford her any gratification, I shall interpose no objection to your praying."

Effingham gave a little start: he feared his expectation was to be disappointed.

"While I regard praying, and religious exercises of every kind as a waste of time," proceeded Mr. Leigh, "I would not have you attribute what I have said to any disposition to wound your feelings, Mr. Adams; and I beg you to be assured that I have no

enmity with you, nor am I wanting in respect for your office. I regard the Christian Church as a great civilizer."

Somewhat mollified by this declaration, the minister knelt to pray, the others, with the exception of Effingham, falling upon their knees where they stood; and the words of the petition were uttered amid a solemn silence, which continued for several minutes after the prayer had been concluded.

Mr. Leigh was the first to break this silence. Pointing with one of his long bony fingers to a cabinet standing against the wall of the chamber, he directed his grandson to open the top drawer, and fetch a package which he would find in the nearest front corner; and, when this was brought to him, placing his hand on the boy's head, he with great difficulty articulated the following words, which were spoken in a voice that grew fainter and fainter under the excitement and effort which their utterance cost:

"Roland, you are the last male representative of a family once large, influential, and illustrious. You will be the inheritor of the proud reputation of a noble race; and you will enjoy a large wealth. This, in itself, is a heavy responsibility. Promise me that you will be steadfast in your efforts to perpetuate the honor of your ancestry; promise me that you will never do any act which will bring reproach upon yourself or upon your family; promise me to achieve a fame greater than that of any of those who have gone before you! Will you do this?"

Trembling with unwonted excitement, Roland Vernon could only bow his head, and murmur,

"I will endeavor to do as you wish!"

"Swear that you will!" cried the impatient old man.

Col. Vernon, who did not wish his son to lightly assume a responsibility, which, perhaps, he did not fully understand, was about to interpose; but Mr. Leigh with a superhuman strength struggled upright and pushed him back, and again shouted,

"Swear, boy—swear!"

Before his father could make himself heard to explain the impropriety of this oath, his usually gentle eye blazing with a

fullness of comprehension, and his lips compressed with the firmness of unalterable resolve, Roland Vernon had looked James Leigh in the eye, and earnestly said,

"I SWEAR!"

"In this package is my will, some records of the family, and a letter of trust. Read the records; have the will executed and enjoy its bequests; and, when you become of age, acquaint yourself with the provisions of the trust and execute them. Do not open the trust until you are of age—do you hear, boy?"

"Yes, sir," was the gentle response.

"Give me your word of honor that you will follow my directions!"

"ON MY HONOR, I WILL FOLLOW THEM!"

Then the proud old Cavalier fell back on his pillows; and was soon beyond the allurements of earthly ambitions, and out of the reach of earthly woes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Reverend Jacob Adams was a native of Massachusetts, but had been a resident of C—town for a quarter of a century. He was a person of very decided ability, but, like his forefathers of Plymouth Rock, full of strong prejudices.

When he came to Carolina, among a few of the citizens who neglected to cultivate his acquaintance, were the Vernons, Leighs, Woodruffs, and others of the Cavalier stock, who had been educated to be Episcopalians, externally at least. They were not pleased with his manners, and took very little trouble to disguise their indifference. The Reverend Jacob Adams was offended at this, and he never forgot the half suppressed contempt of these "slaveocrats," as he indignantly stigmatized these families; on the contrary, he treasured it up against them, longing for an opportunity to retaliate—a yearning which was never gratified.

When the Reverend Jacob Adams first came to C—town, although Mr. James Leigh did not extend to him an invitation to his house, he was polite to him whenever they accidentally met, on the street or

elsewhere. But the Puritan was not content with such a recognition; and finding that he was not to advance in Mr. Leigh's esteem, ceased returning his salutations. So it happened that, except upon one other occasion when his ministerial services were needed at Rushbrook, he had not entered that house until he was called in by Mrs. Vernon to pray for her father upon his death-bed; and so it was that Mr. Leigh and Col. Vernon were hated very cordially by the Reverend Jacob Adams.

Since his settlement in C—town, Mr. Adams lost his wife, who left one son, a boy of Roland Vernon's age. This boy's name was Paul.

A few years after the death of his wife, Mr. Adams married Mrs. Reeves, a widow with one daughter, a few years younger than his son Paul; and since that marriage the household at the Parsonage consisted of the minister, his wife, his son Paul, and Alice Reeves. Alice called Paul brother, and Paul called Alice sister. However, there was very little fraternal affection wasted between these two—for some reason they were not very congenial spirits.

About eighteen months after the death of Mr. Leigh, the Rev. Mr. Adams and his wife were sitting in the study at the Parsonage, Mrs. Adams sewing in front of the grate, in which a cheerful fire burned brightly, and her husband writing a sermon at a table close at hand.

The lady rose to stir the fire; and the minister paused at the end of a sentence to collect his thoughts for a new dash at exposition: simultaneously both heard a noise at the front door.

Rap! Rap! Rap!

"There's some one at the door. Perhaps it's Paul and Alice; but it's early for them to return from the skating pond," spoke up the preacher. "Hadn't you better step and see who it is, my dear?"

Mrs. Adams got up and went out. She opened the door. She screamed wildly. She swooned.

Mr. Adams rushed to the door. He looked out. He cried in agonized accents, "For the sake of Heaven, what is the matter. Quick! speak!"

There stood Roland Vernon wet to the skin; there lay Paul Adams pale, almost

lifeless and frozen on the floor of the portico; there nestled the cold shivering form of Alice Reeves in the arms of Roland—her preserver.

"They are nearly dead—take him into the house! I'll bring *her*! If you are not quick they will be beyond recovery!" was the hurried explanation. "Send somebody for a physician!" And staggering into the study, the boy deposited his charge on a lounge.

"How did this happen?" shrieked Mr. Adams, excited beyond measure, and glaring at Roland like a maniac. "Tell me, boy!"

Roland did not answer him, but staggered to a window and threw it up, crying out in a loud voice to Dr. Effingham who was just passing,

"Come in here, Doctor. Paul and Alice are dying!"

The physician heard the wild shriek of terror with which the words were accompanied, and looked in the direction from whence it proceeded. Just as he looked, Roland beckoned to him, making a frantic gesture; and then fell back on the floor exhausted.

Doctor Effingham came in immediately and administered restoratives; and, in a short while, Roland was able to change his garments, putting on a suit of Paul's, which Mrs. Adams, who had in the meantime recovered her wits, insisted upon his donning.

Paul was insensible, although the physician kept pouring stimulants down his throat. Alice was delirious, and would shriek, "Help, for the love of God, help!" and then the poor thing would shiver and cry, "Oh! I am so very, very cold!" and then she would murmur ever so tenderly, "My preserver, my dear, dear preserver! Roland, my preserver!"

Mrs. Adams did not say a word when she heard this; but ran, and caught him in her arms, and hugged him, and wept.

As soon as assistance could be obtained Paul was taken to his room, and put in his bed, by which his father sat and watched. So was Alice, Mrs. Adams attending her, and watching her with an unwinking eye; but the good lady found time to steal back into the study now and then, to ascertain

whether Roland was comfortable, or not; that young gentleman having been peremptorily ordered by Dr. Effingham to take to the lounge, and wait until he was perfectly strong, before starting homewards.

In the course of a couple of hours, overcome with the heat of the room, and the stimulants he had taken, and the natural buoyancy and strength of his constitution, Roland felt perfectly strong, and got ready to go back to Rushbrook.

Mr. Adams came down from Paul's room and met him in the passage, as he was on the point of leaving.

"Well, my young man," said the preacher, "can't you tell me how all this occurred, now that the excitement is over?"

"I *could* tell you, sir," replied Roland, who did not like the old minister, and, now that he had been treated so scurvily by him, was more than ever disposed to despise him; "but I prefer not. Your son, or your daughter can detail the affair."

"I suppose you enticed them into the folly which has come so near costing them their lives; and that the subject is, therefore, an unpleasant one?" sneered the man whose mission it was to proclaim good will on earth.

"You are at liberty to suppose just what you please, sir," was the hot-headed reply.

"I must say you are extremely discourteous, considering you are in my house," observed Mr. Adams, assuming a great deal of dignity; "and that you have very little respect for my holy office. That is entitled to respect, even if I cannot command it in my own proper person."

"If you had been a gentleman; if you had exhibited the slightest recognition of my service in saving the miserable life of your cowardly son; if you had not proved yourself a boor, and a spiteful one at that, I should not have done my own self-respect violence by bandying words with you. I wish you a good afternoon, Mr. Adams!"

Roland Vernon made the parson a profound obeisance; and, turning on his heel, left the roof from which he had averted a great calamity, with an unspeakable disgust for its plebian-mannered master.

His horse and rockaway stood at the door, where he had left them: Springing into the vehicle he drove furiously away.

When Paul grew well enough to be subjected to interrogation, Mr. Adams sought to obtain from him a statement of the circumstances which had led to the misfortune which had befallen Alice and himself; but the youth was indisposed to talk about the matter, and was almost as reticent as Roland Vernon.

Finding that there was some mystery connected with the affair, which neither of the youths were willing to disclose, Mr. Adams insisted upon an examination of Alice, and bade his wife ascertain the motive of the silence of both lads.

Pressed by her mother, Alice cleared up the whole matter, giving a detailed story, which was so discreditable to Paul, and so creditable to Roland, that the old minister bit his lips with anger and chagrin when it was repeated to him.

Paul had gone to an ice-pond on the Rushbrook plantation to skate, and had taken Alice with him to watch the exhilarating sport. When they reached the pond they found Roland Vernon, and a number of boys from the town, already there enjoying the excellent ice which covered a cove of the pond.

Roland, it seems, was a champion, among his companions, in all their manly sports and exercises, and as a graceful and swift skater was without a rival. He knew the pond, how far it was safe to venture from the banks, which ice was strong, and which brittle or rotten; and when he prescribed a limit, beyond which he considered it unsafe to venture, few of his comrades ever dared to disregard his counsel.

When Paul Adams went upon the pond he immediately challenged Roland for a race, and, his challenge having been accepted, he was beaten. He disliked Roland, and Roland disliked him; for they were rivals in every thing, at school in their studies, on the play ground in their sports, and even in the society of their girlish sweethearts. Baffled in his effort to surpass Roland in that trial of skill, Paul grew excited and dared Roland to follow him across the pond to a cove on the opposite side where others were skating. Roland declined to risk his life in such a foolish attempt. Paul taunted him with timidity. Roland merely curled his lip

and glided away from him. Then Paul made Alice get on a small sled, which he pulled with a string; got her consent to be carried over to the opposite bank; called on the other boys to follow him; taunted them and bullied them into complying; and dashed off to execute his foolhardy purpose. Roland besought them not to go; warning them of the great danger; and endeavored to mollify and dissuade Paul from the undertaking, but in vain. They went whirling forward, Paul at the head, with Alice seated in the sled, and got nearly across the pond. Crack! Crack! Crack! The ice broke. Paul and Alice screamed, and went down into the deep water; but rose, and clutched the edges of the brittle ice, which kept breaking in their grasp. Still they managed to keep from sinking. At the first alarm the rest of the party turned, and, being several yards behind Paul, made their escape to the shore. Roland watched them, and, when he heard their screams, seized a rail from a neighboring fence and sped to their rescue. He arrived at the scene of the disaster; threw the rail across the ugly hole, in which they were struggling, half frozen, for life; plunged in and succeeded in getting both of the unfortunates out on the bank. Here there was no fire; so, without hesitating, he had them placed in his rockaway and drove rapidly to the Parsonage.

When Mrs. Adams recited these circumstances to her husband, he sent for Alice, and had her to tell him over again, listening to her attentively until she concluded her statement.

"How did Paul behave, after he got into the water? Did he assist you?" he asked, when she ceased speaking.

"No, sir. He was too badly frightened. I had to take care of myself; and would have drowned, but for Roland Vernon," replied Alice.

"Did Paul get out by himself—without assistance?"

"No, sir. He tried to make Roland take him out first; but Roland paid no attention to him, until I was safe. Paul is a great coward, sir." Alice said this very quietly, as if she was not aware of the extent of the disgrace of Paul's behavior.

"What! Paul a coward! I don't believe a word of your story!" cried the old man, indignantly. But he did believe it; and that was why the shoe pinched so excruciatingly!

"Oh! I didn't mean to say that. He's brave enough at times, and fights, and stands up like a noble fellow. But he gets excited in great danger, and don't know what to do. Besides, he is *so* selfish!"

"Selfish is he!—there you are again! I see plainly that you have had some disagreement with him, and are a prejudiced witness."

"Yes, sir; he is selfish! Else, why did he want Roland to leave me to drown, and take him out of the pond first?"

That question was a stinger; and Mr. Adams thought it best to bring out no more damaging facts on this cross examination. So he told Alice that was sufficient, and walked into his study to finish writing his sermon.

CHAPTER V.

THERE was a delightful retreat at Rushbrook, well stocked with entertaining and instructive books; comfortably furnished with easy chairs, and sofas, and writing tables; and adorned with many old family portraits, suspended on its walls; and in it, Roland Vernon, who, even while a boy, had made it a familiar haunt, reclined near one of its windows.

Roland was just at that period when men are most vain and most ambitious, and when they take most delight in their wealth, their rank, their talents, and their personal attractions. He was a proud, haughty, aristocratic fellow; vain of himself, vainer of his possessions, vainest of his unspotted lineage.

He was leisurely contemplating the faces of the portraits of his ancestors and their kinsmen, and was thinking of the dead Vernons and Leighs of the many generations represented in those gilt framed pictures. He liked the society of these richly dressed courtiers and ladies, and admired

their costly costumes, their ruffles, their laces, their powdered hair, and the mummeries of the olden fashions. He had been studying the annals of this race, and devouring the pages of Froissart which chronicled their gallantries and their knightly deeds. He was thinking how he should render his name as famous as that of any of these people of the past. He was dreaming—nothing more!

Yes. He was dreaming!

There, in that very room, years and years before, Roland Vernon's favorite occupation was to lie and dream, surrounded by these Vernons and Leighs of the times passed away. He was something of a poet, not that he talked or wrote poetry; but he thought and dreamed poetry in that delightful old room.

When he was not dreaming, he pored over the amusing books on those dingy shelves.

Roland was never a studious boy; that is to say, as studious boys generally are—fond of school and text books. But he was a voracious reader, and kept his memory lumbered with all sorts of valuable, curious, and worthless information that he had insensibly acquired while seeking pleasure, and not knowledge, from the rare old volumes in that library.

Among other books which he found in that room were the works of Gibbon, Hume, Shelley, Paine, and those of many English authors whose opinions are in conflict with the generally received teachings of theologians; and these, together with translations of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other French and German Infidels and Transcendentalists, he read with the greatest avidity. Of course communion with the bold thoughts of these irreverent speculatists, silently and surely produced a complete revulsion of his faith. The creed which had been taught him at his mother's knee was instantly put on the defensive; and, while he found enough of contradiction in the theories of these anti-Christian philosophers to preserve him from a blind acceptance of their doctrines, he was irresistibly driven to a vague and wavering skepticism, from which he only found his way to a steadfast belief by the light of the disclosures of physical science; and, although it

will scarcely be denied that any fixed faith is better than gloomy doubt, he was even then further than ever from the Gospel-founded creed of his childhood.

With his mind thus stored with much undigested food for thought, and his brain teeming with wild speculations—the invariable effect of misdirected reading upon undisciplined intellects—it was fortunate, very fortunate, that Roland Vernon, in his seventeenth year, at the urgent solicitation of his parents, consented to enter the sophomore class of the State University, with a view to becoming a member of the legal profession after graduation.

Col. Vernon held that most of the intemperance that curses humanity is the result of an enforced abstemiousness of wine in the domestic circle, and that half of the young men who become drunkards are first impelled to their dissipated habits by a desire to enjoy a forbidden pleasure; and it was probably due to his practical assertion of this theory, in his relations with his son, previous to the latter's departure for the university, that Roland spent three years at a college, which was a nursery of this great social evil, without contracting any injurious habits.

And since he withstood all allurements to vice of that kind, his collegiate education was of very decided benefit, as it assisted to discipline his mind. His severe application to the study of mathematics and the natural sciences brought him out wonderfully; and this course of training assisted him to make his extensive miscellaneous reading serve him in good stead of the classics, which he sadly neglected. (If his knowledge of his own language had not necessarily been empirical, instead of critical, on this account, his law reading during the last year at the university, and his attendance on the law lectures of an eminent jurist, whose school he attended after taking his degree, together with his unaided ante-collegiate studies, and his close application to his college text books, would have given him a very fair education to commence life upon, even in an age of great polish.)

As it was, he was at home, having been admitted to the bar; and he was looking forward to the attainment of his majority.

Grown man that he was, however; graduate of the university; attorney and counsellor-at-law; aspirant for fame; he was still the same dreamer that he had ever been in his boyhood. As fond of that seat by the window! As fond of looking up into the eyes of those painted courtiers and ladies that were beaming down on him so gently! As fond of Froissart's old chronicles!

But now the book has fallen on the floor, and Roland Vernon, as of old, is dreaming!

A person of noiseless step enters, and glides across the floor. A caressing hand gathers up the abundance of curly golden hair that crests his forehead and toys with it tenderly. A soft toned, mellow, soul-stirring voice calls the dreamer from his meditations. He wakes from his revery, starts up, clasps a loving arm around the neck of the fair intruder, and says, with a little show of surprise, mingled with fondness,

"Why, mother! you frightened me by coming in so stealthily. Do you want anything?"

"Do I want anything? What a question for a boy to ask his mother! as if a mother cannot steal away from her duties to spend a few minutes with her son that has been absent so long, without being asked, like a servant, Do you want anything? Oh! Roland! Roland!"

"Oh! you know I was half asleep, Mamma! Come, and let me tell you what I want," he said, with a look of apology.

"Well, what, my son!"

"I want the books and shelves in this room dusted, the windows washed, the blinds habitually kept open instead of closed, new and brighter curtains, and more cheerful looking covers on this dingy old furniture. I want the library to be a dark haunt no longer, but would have it the common sitting-room of all the inmates of Rushbrook. I want to see those old faces," pointing to the portraits on the wall, "lighted up with plenty of glittering sunshine."

"What a laborious task you set me, Roland! But suppose I agree to make the change, what will you do for me in return?" was Mrs. Vernon's response.

"Anything!" was Roland's earnest reply.

"Will you make that Northern tour with me, and go to spend a few weeks with those Vermont relations?"

"Ah, Mamma! You were very indignant when I asked you what you wanted; but now I see that you came in here especially to tease me with that abominable Northern tour. I declare I cannot go with you. I dislike those people!"

"Then, unless you do, you shall not have this room altered; and I may be so vexed that I will not let you stay at Rushbrook even! Roland, my son, I have fixed my heart on this tour—why can't you go with me? If your father was not so very busy, I would not ask you to go. Please, my son!"

"Why, Mamma, if it has come to this, of course I'll do just as you wish. I am ready to start now."

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was a lively crowd grouped on the decks of the *Cosmopolitan* that delightful September afternoon; and as the prow of the elegant steamer divided the waters of the Hudson, gleaming in the sunshine, a scene of loveliness was disclosed to the enraptured view of the thousand tourists present, which was well worthy of the admiration which they so lavishly bestowed. In the distance, the peaks of the Catskill range were looming up, crowned with a glow of effulgent radiance that made those lofty mountains resplendent with an almost heavenly beauty. Exclamations of pleasure and amazement escaped from many tongues, and attested Nature's generous bounty in providing the charming landscape which she had there pictured.

The *Cosmopolitan's* passengers stood, with a riveted gaze, as quietly as if they were within the precincts of some hallowed shrine. In solemn silence, they watched, until the mists of evening began to engloom the skies with their shades, and until, where light and loveliness had been, stalked grim Darkness.

Scarce was there a soul on board the *Cos-*

mopolitan so bankrupt in sensibility as to escape the genial influence of this "thing of beauty." Still to three persons it was almost wholly lost.

Apart from the rest, talked these three; gesticulating vehemently, and speaking in excited tones.

Doctor Sangster: New Yorker. Physician. Politician. Humanitarian.

Mr. Joseph Carson: Vermonter. Abolitionist. Editor. Lawyer. Clever Fellow, in spite of his Ideas.

Mr. Roland Vernon: Carolinian. Lawyer. Fire-Eater. Gentleman.

Such were the *Dramatis Personæ* of the lively little Drama, then being enacted on the deck of that Albany steamer.

Mrs. Vernon, unconscious of aught else, leant over the railing and watched the fantastic cloud-shapes, the mountain's grandeur, the burnished waters rippling with waves of molten gold, all the latent poetry of her soul quickened into a sublime enthusiasm. She did not miss her son, who had relinquished his post at her side to join his fellow disputants.

For long, Vernon was silent. He listened to much that was unpleasant; and, despite his fiery nature and impetuous temper, repressed his rising indignation, and held his peace with remarkable coolness, until at last he was so provoked he could not control his tongue.

It happened thus:

"But, my dear Mr. Carson," said Doctor Sangster, "while I agree with you that the institution of slavery is full of injustice to the Negro, and should be restricted, as far as practicable, and kept out of the territories by Congressional legislation, besides its abolition in the District of Columbia, I doubt very much the policy of uprooting the system in the Southern States, where it has so long been in existence, and where the climate is such that none but slave labor can develop the wealth of the soil."

"You fail to take a comprehensive view of this matter, Doctor," said Carson with a self complacent smile. "The Abolition of Slavery is demanded as a political necessity, not as a humane step. The North must control the government; and, before this can be consummated, the South

must be destroyed. Do you not perceive?"

"No!" thundered Sangster, in a voice full of indignation, "I can perceive no good reason for disturbing the pleasant relations of the sections. As to the right of this question, Congress clearly has no power under the Constitution, to interfere with the system authorized and protected, as it is, by the internal regulations of the different states. But, were it otherwise, I have no desire to see the American people plunged into a Civil War, a result certain to follow any attempt to coerce the South. Therefore, I must express my repugnance for the views which you have advanced. Before everything else, I AM A UNIONIST!"

"Just so!" answered Carson with a slight sneer. "And before everything else, I am a Northerner! I can tell you, Sangster, that the Abolition party is growing in this country. Motives of policy, too, govern that party; and not a despicable poetical sentimental sympathy for the Negro. The South is getting to be too prosperous and too influential; and, unless the North takes immediate steps to ruin its great rival, it will have to abandon all its schemes for aggrandizement. The people see this, and in November 1860 they will act."

"You admit the correctness of my charges against your party, Mr. Carson!" continued the Doctor, waxing very hot. "You yield all that I claimed; you do not deny that the organization is a purely sectional one, nor that it is governed entirely by sordid motives, nor that the sympathy professed for the slave is a bare cheat, intended to inveigle weak sentimentalists into the support of party aims. Sir, I can have no community of interest or feeling with any party which is founded on a Lie, and which acknowledges no higher controlling principle than self and sectional aggrandizement. I do not believe that such a party can ever triumph in this country! I HAVE TOO MUCH CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE PEOPLE!"

"Very frank, Doctor—very! But you are in error. You do not know human nature! You expect men to do what is theoretically right, when to do so is to ruin themselves! You are not stepping apace with the age—this is a practical era!"

"Perhaps you are right! But I have

yet to learn to approve the wrong to even advance my interests. I do not belong to your school of politics, certainly."

"Nevertheless, in less than two years, you will change your views. Mark my prediction, Sangster! The entire North will fall into the ranks in support of the great movement for the redemption of this mighty section from that disaster which is inevitable unless the South is crushed; and you will be with the rest of the Northern people."

"Never! Never!" responded the excited physician, hotly repudiating this as an aspersion on his intelligence and honor.

"Of course, you think not now!" was the calm rejoinder. "But the current will soon become strong and irresistible. Already the foreign element, the strength of which is powerfully felt in our elections, seeing the fertile lands of the South closed against its advance, because slavery is such an economical system that it will not let free labor flourish by its side, feels deeply interested in the abolition movement, and has begun to array itself for the coming battle. As sure as the dawn follows the darkness, the Republican party will soon clutch the throat of the South with the grip of a giant and prostrate that haughty section suppliant at the feet of the victorious and prosperous North."

When Mr. Carson concluded, Vernon who had listened in silent amazement, advanced towards him, his blue eye flashing with quivering and fiery glances, and his frame convulsed and trembling with powerful emotion.

"That, sir, will be a blood-bought victory!" said the Carolinian. "Aye! a victory which will cost the expenditure of a valor, which the history of Northern prowess in the past does not justify the most favorably prejudiced mind in attributing to the people of that section, wherein the Dollar is deified, and honor is constantly, habitually derided. Your party will provoke a fight, and will be whipped! I wish your Puritan coadjutors would attempt the execution of the scheme that you have indicated. The Union would be destroyed; the South would have a fair pretext for asserting its commercial independence!"

"I fear that young gentleman is a dis-

unionist!" observed the Doctor, interrupting Roland's burst of wrath; and, then, satirically adding, "I am exceedingly pleased to know, however, that his sentiments have not been proclaimed with sufficient publicity to hasten the calamity with which he threatens this country."

Paying no attention to the Doctor's ironical manner, Roland proceeded.

"It is true, sir. I do not deny that I am a disunionist. I AM SOUTHERN TO THE BACKBONE!"

Carson laughed, and remarked: "I have no desire to excite you, sir. I have no personal feelings of hostility to the Southern people. I am a patriot, and a Northerner, and I espouse the interests of my section. I like you for espousing the interests of yours!"

Roland recovered his composure, and looked around. There stood his mother, her face blanched with terror.

"Charlie!" she whispered. "Charlie! Let us go in, my son. The air grows very cold."

He hurriedly joined her and offered his arm; not perceiving, in his excitement, that she was escorted by an elderly gentleman with a distinguished air.

"I have fortunately found an old friend, my son. Mr. Ashe, let me introduce my son—Mr. Roland Vernon."

The gentlemen exchanged greetings; and Mrs. Vernon continued by way of explanation,

"Mr. Ashe is an old and valued friend of your father's, and, also, a native of C—town."

"You have just returned from France?"

"Yes; and I confess myself much surprised to find the American people so ripe for a revolution. What a change has been wrought in the last three years! When I left America every thing was quiet; now every thing breathes of war.

"I think there is every reason to believe that the beginning is not far in the Future," said Roland.

"So do I! In this connection—I overheard your discussion; and, while I regret that such a necessity exists, agree with you in the hope that the bond of Union will soon be snapped. The South has already suffered beyond endurance! Does

your father coincide with you in your opinion?" asked Mr. Ashe, thoughtfully.

"He does not express himself very freely. He is a Whig, but a States' Rights Whig; and, although I have never heard him say so, he will doubtless be for the resistance of any illegalities of the Republican party."

"Well, sir, I am determined; I shall go back to Carolina and help to prepare the public mind for the conflict. When it comes, then I go into the fight."

"And I will be with you. I long for the fray!"

The supper bell here interrupted the conversation of the fire-eaters. Mr. Ashe joined his own party; and Roland and Mrs. Vernon went to the table.

The long hours between supper and dawn, wore slowly away. The *Cosmopolitan's* paddles beat against the water all the night, and the machinery of the boat kept up its unremitting hum.

At daybreak, however, Albany looked calmly down upon the river from its seat on the hill; and, in a few hours more, the Vernons were whirling over the railway, hastening, as fast as the iron horse could carry them, to the home of their Northern relatives.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a girl's musical laugh!

One of those merry, gushing, joyous peals, that awaken tender thoughts in the most callous breasts, and that stir unsympathizing age with pleasant memories!

And the face?

It was a bright, happy, mirthful face!

Although the features of Dolores Vaughn were nearly hidden in the masses of black wavy hair that fell upon the window sill as she leant out to whisper with the graceful but delicate youth who stood in the twilight, starting, yet unwilling to leave his fair enchantress, enough of her sweet expression to afford the necessary data for a judgment on her charms, was caught from those bewitching eyes, pleading earnestly

with him to stay, while her words, uttered as rapidly as a glib Yankee tongue could rattle, bade him seek shelter from the keen and penetrating mountain breeze that made him shiver, even while basking in the warming effulgence of beauty's most fascinating smile.

"So you really condescend to flatter a poor Green Mountain girl! Where's your vaunted dislike and contempt for all Yankee nature? Your prejudices have very suddenly vanished, Mr. Roland Vernon!"

Then the ringing laugh and the coquetish glance; telling plainly enough that the young lady's vanity had suggested a satisfactory explanation of this unexpected change of sentiment.

"Oh! but you know, I didn't include you. We Vernons stick to our kin; and I'm sure you are my cousin, Dolores. You don't repudiate the relationship?"

There was a half-amused look in his face while he waited for her response.

"Yes; I do, sir!" she cried. "I'm only your second cousin's cousin; so no more of your sophistry. I can't be blarneyed by an aristocrat, even though I am but 'an humble maiden.' You know well enough that we're no kin; but, suppose I was, you'd turn up your nose at me at the South!"

She uttered the words mockingly and archly; continuing, before he could reply, in a bantering tone:

"Don't stand there, shivering in the night air! You'll be too sick to-morrow to go to the picnic!"

"Are you going, Dolores?"

"I will not tell you. I said I would not, and I will not. If you want to find out, go and see! I declare you had better run along home; it's getting late, and you know"—here she laughed merrily again, and looked at him with a glance that appealed to him to stay more eloquently than words could have besought—"and you know there's a ghost at the bridge. Besides, I hear mother scolding because I have not fixed the tea table. Go now—that's a nice fellow!"

Somehow, or other, while she was speaking he had drawn nearer the window, and she had bowed her head closer to his, extending her pretty hand. Emboldened by

a tell-tale something that nestled in her eye and quivered in her voice he seized this and pressed it impulsively. Then two mouths puckered and pouted for a kiss; and then—there was a smack?

No! Unfortunately, no!

Then, instead of the smack, Mrs. Vaughn approached very inopportunistically and said,

"Dolores, your Pa is impatient for tea, dear. Can't you prevail on Mr. Vernon to come in?" And, addressing him, she added, "We will be delighted, sir, to have you remain with us!"

Roland would gladly have accepted the cordial invitation; but Dolores signalled to him to decline. He obeyed.

The girl was averse to being teased by her female friends; and, as Roland's attentions had not escaped their notice, she discouraged too much frequency in his visits. But he was an impudent fellow, who invariably took an ell when given an inch, and persisted in hanging around her wherever she went. She was stubborn in one thing, however, and could not be dissuaded from her purpose. He must not let people see how great was their intimacy, as they certainly would, if he kept taking meals with her. So it was that she telegraphed her dissent when her mother invited him into the house.

He understood her signal, and complied with her desire as became a discreet and well-behaved—VISITOR.

Dolores said that he was nothing more!

Did Dolores tell the whole truth?

Mrs. Vaughn did not press Roland to stay when he pleaded an absolute engagement; and he was permitted to bow himself out of their presence with a pleasant adieu.

He took a little path that led to the wicker gate that opened upon the Fairchild farm, and walked slowly down through the trees. After going about a hundred paces he was half inclined to turn back and brave the displeasure of Dolores; but then he feared the anger of that witch who tormented his waking moments and haunted his very dreams. So he walked on. Then he stopped. His attention was attracted by a loud cough. He peered through the gloaming and saw a white handkerchief flutter under the tall trees in front of Mr.

Vaughn's house. Then another peal of laughter rang on the evening breeze, and he caught sight of a girlish form flitting through the open door.

"Does she love me?"

When her clear ringing laugh broke the silence, Roland asked himself the question. But he could not give himself a calm, reliable answer. In her there were no symptoms of the tender passion!

"Does he love me?"

Before he stopped and looked back, Dolores asked herself this question. The next moment she gave herself a satisfactory response. In him the indications of the fearful malady were plainly discernible!

Arriving in B— Roland and his mother had become the guests of Mr. Fairchild—a grandson of old Colonel Louis Vernon, the founder of the Walloomscoik settlement, and of the Northern branch of the Vernon family. Side by side with Mr. Fairchild's estate, and located on the road that leads northwards from the village of B— Centre, Mr. Vaughn's farm nestled in the shadow of the long mountain range that bounds the valley of the Walloomscoik.

After his domestication in Mr. Fairchild's family, Roland was not long in making acquaintances among the young people of the neighborhood, with many of whom he was soon on terms of familiarity and friendship. But of the bevy of pretty girls in the township he was fondest of Dolores Vaughn, a niece of Mr. Fairchild's wife. She was brighter than a sunbeam, playful, witty, the toast of a dozen badly smitten village swains. Perhaps it was to tease them that she went assiduously to work to captivate the young Carolinian when he made his appearance in B—; but, no matter what the reason, she succeeded admirably; and—got entrapped herself.

Oh! what a dance she led him, the ardent flirt! Now she betrayed a fond tenderness in some seemingly careless word, and filled him with hope; now she displayed the utmost indifference, and drove him to despair.

Matters had stood this way between

them until he went home that evening asking himself 'if she loved him; taking courage from her soft manner and confident tone—taking fright at the levity with which she had been treating him all the afternoon.

Roland resolved that night that the morrow's sun should not set without relieving his suspense; and Dolores resolved that, if any art of her's could protract his torture, she would make him very wretched before she would speak the words that she was sure would make him extremely happy.

Take care, Roland! Don't be too impetuous in your struggle to burst from the darkness of Doubt, into the light of Assurance!

Take care, Dolores! Don't carry your pretty, harmless whims too far, lest your light, but loving, heart lead you into the midst of miseries.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE sun rose brightly above the range of mountains, and illuminated a clear sky, upon the blue vault of which there was not a fleck of cloud.

All the youth of B—— were astir; and, very early, the paths towards the base of Mount Antony were flocked with gallants and ladies fair.

They were going to the Pic-Nic; and, among the others, Roland Vernon, who awoke from rosy dreams, strolled along with a gait that betokened the pleasantness of his thoughts.

Dolores, of whom he was constantly thinking, had appeared to him in his slumbers the night before, so gentle, so bewitching, her looks so full of love, her words so fond, that he had accepted the visitation of his dream as a harbinger of a new happiness.

His eye sparkled with undisguised joy; his happy soul was mirrored in his shining face; and a look of prouder exultation could not have encircled and illuminated him had he already listened to her vows at the altar, a delighted bridegroom, in-

stead of a trembling lover yet in doubt of his fate.

When Roland reached Mount Antony he looked everywhere for Dolores, but she was not to be found. His high spirits abated immediately; but in a few minutes his heart gave a great thump of delight, and Dolores was before him, allowing him to feast his eyes.

Then followed the struggle for the summit of the mountain. The girls scrambled up the rocks with great agility, affording their escorts but a poor opportunity for the display of their courtliness.

After this steep and difficult ascent was made, the couples, who had attained the summit, began to scatter.

Vernon attempted to seize the occasion now presented to press his suit, and endeavored to entice Dolores from a giggling crowd of girls whose beaux were men in buckram.

Dolores pertinaciously refused to be enticed; and sat looking at him under her eyelashes and enjoying his undisguised discomfiture.

Vernon thought desperate thoughts. If he had been a certain tyrant that Lord Byron refers to in one of his stanzas, and had possessed the power, he would have had the necks of that group of girls whose beaux were men in buckram, welded into one very huge neck, and ordered the headsman to do his duty.

So passed a greater part of the forenoon: Vernon uncomfortable and badly vexed—Dolores calculating the extent of his capacity for endurance of suspense, and inventing new tortures for her victim.

Nature has given women hearts, very fortunately, as well as diabolical minds, that are prolific in resources of annoyance; and, at length, it became a question, not how long Roland could endure, but how long Dolores could repress her own longings to enjoy his suffering.

Time passed. Vernon began to get reconciled to his disappointment. Dolores commenced to cave.

Just at this juncture dinner had to be prepared by the girls; and Dolores, with the rest, attended to this duty.

Dinner was gotten through pleasantly enough. The girls whose beaux were men

in buckram, ate heartily, and, in the afternoon, felt weary, and left the road unobstructed for Vernon.

The pickle, and sandwiches, and so forths, rallied his flagging love; and he heroically resolved to make another dash.

He sauntered up carelessly to where Dolores was sitting, and proposed a walk. She looked at him through her eyelashes to see whether a refusal would be the best tactics. She was puzzled, and her woman's wit, for once, was unequal to the emergency. She was not of the risking kind, and assented.

"Let's go sit at the roots of that old ash. There is a pretty knoll in front, from which we can look deep down into the glen that leads to the panther's lair," suggested Roland, when Dolores acceded to his request to stroll with him.

"Anywhere you choose!" she gaily answered, taking his proffered arm. "The view is magnificent from that point; and, besides, there is a very comfortable shade."

Roland led her to the designated spot, made her a seat, and then dropped down by her side.

"Oh, Dolores!" he whispered, gratefully, when he thought he had succeeded in subduing her coldness. "I am so rejoiced that you have, at length, concluded to hear me. I have been so miserable, all day; but now I am very, very happy. When you knew how devotedly I loved you, why did you treat me with such unkindness?"

Dolores saw that it was coming. She had made him commit himself. He confessed that he loved her; and that he was miserable out of her society. The temptation, now that she had him at her mercy, to protract his suffering was too great. She could not resist it. (What woman could?) So she made up her mind hurriedly to be inexorable.

"You astonish me, Mr. Vernon!" she said with a little bounce of well acted surprise. "What have I ever said or done to authorize such a conjecture? I know that you loved me devotedly! Pray, sir, acquit me of that charge!"

And she rose to her feet, (expecting to be pulled back, of course!) as if she was going to leave him alone.

He sprang up too, and confronted her.

"Then you spurn my love! Your heart

does not answer to the maddening passion that rages in my breast. Oh, Dolores, Dolores! be frank with me. Speak my misery, pronounce my doom, or make me blessed in the possession of your love——"

"—— Good evening, gentlemen! I am so glad you have come. Mr. Vernon is so dull and uninteresting, I have been struggling for the last hour to keep awake."

Dolores said this lightly and laughingly to a couple of swains, who, being unable to join the party earlier, had come out from the village since dinner, and were advancing to pay their respects to her, just as Roland, who did not observe their approach, was in the midst of his passionate avowal of love.

When she carelessly uttered the unmeaning words, she little knew how deeply they would sink into Roland's heart; nor did she notice the quiver of pain which convulsed him when she walked away with Jones Hyde, the taller and handsomer of these young men.

Roland watched them until they passed out of sight. Then he sat down upon a huge rock, and, bowing his head upon his hands, thought over each treasured word that had fallen from her lips, and remembered each trivial incident that had occurred since this delicious dream of young love had commenced.

Picture after picture, clearly and distinctly defined and shaded, rose before him, nothing forgotten. Tenderly uttered words reverberated in his ears, and mocked him with their unredeemed promises. Not a look, not a gesture, not an utterance of her's was forgotten. Memory was tenacious of all that had contributed to excite his love and fan his hopes.

Then, with the facts all before him, he tried to reconcile them with the postulate that she really loved him. He clutched at this hope as the drowning man grasps at a straw. But such an interpretation of her action, though the true one, seemed to him a bold absurdity.

Then he endeavored to reason himself into the conviction that she was a beautiful flirt, who had sported with his affections; but he immediately relinquished this surmise, for he loved her too much to do her injustice.

Then he concluded that she had never loved him, and that those actions which he had mistaken for encouragement, were but the tender outgoings of a pure, unsuspecting, and warm nature.

Even this speculation was not entirely satisfactory; and Roland soon wearied of the effort to solve the intricate problem, which so puzzled his dizzy brain, and distressed his sorrowing heart.

He lit a cigar, and commenced smoking, puffing the light clouds in all directions, encircling his head in a dense volume of thin blue smoke, and making the curling wreaths dance lightly on the airy eddies of the afternoon breezes which were playing around the hoary mountain's brow.

The glad cheerfulness that had panoplied him with happiness in the morning, while his soul was aglow with sweet aspirations, was gone; and a stony look that told of despair was settling in his eye, and a pallor that whispered of distressing agonies, was overspreading his features.

The cigar soothed him; his brain began to recover its balance; his thoughts were being settled into calmness.

After a while he threw away the half-finished Havana, and again bestowed his attention upon the subject which he had been contemplating with so little satisfaction before he lit his cigar.

Now he arrived at a settled conclusion, and, faulty as it was, it was acted upon without hesitation.

He drew out a note-book; turned its leaves; found a blank page; took his pencil, and wrote a hurried note. He tore the leaf from the book, folded it, and addressed it to Miss Dolores Vaughn. He called a lad not very far off, and asked him to deliver it.

Then a great sob; and he went towards the village.

the interruption of her *tete-a-tete* with Roland Vernon.

Looking back to watch the effect which her departure would have upon him, she took in the tableau which has just been described. She saw him stagger to a seat, saw him bow his head on his hands, saw him light his cigar, then throw it away, and then saw him write a note, call a boy, and go away.

She saw all this; but did not read its significance aright.

If she had appreciated his situation, and known of the keen suffering which she had inflicted, she would not have protracted her absence, but would have speedily returned to console him with her lavish smiles and deep affection.

As it was she staid long away from the knoll where she parted from him; and frisked gaily, sang snatches of song, and seemed as free from anxiety as the bright-plumed birds that were flying overhead.

Her vivacity charmed her companions; her wit sparkled with a brilliance that outshone all her former displays of that subtle power. Not a shade darkened her brow; her heart beat strong with exultation; and her eyes glistened with delight and happiness.

Roland Vernon loved her madly, devotedly! She had read the tale of his passion in his agitated manner; she had heard the story in his sighs, and in the tremulous tones of his musical voice; but, better than all!—he had given expression to its feeling in burning, eloquent words.

And, knowing this and exulting over it, she was wild with a delirium of joy!

Yet, ignorantly, she was on the point of losing this treasure that she valued so highly.

Oh! that she had hastened back to his side and cast herself into the embrace of him whose outstretched arms longed to clasp her, and whose panting bosom yearned for her to nestle upon and still its wild beatings! Oh! that she had confessed her soft desires and maddening love and gone to him and given throb for throb, pulsation for pulsation, kiss for kiss! Then she had won happiness; then she had escaped fastening a great misery upon her young life; then she had not made for herself a bed of thorns!

CHAPTER IX.

DOLORES chatted pleasantly enough with Jones Hyde, for an hour or more; and, to all appearances she was not displeased at

Dolores wearied of her escort after a while ; and tired of the homage which her rare charms were winning from those whose applause brought her no gratification.

"Mr. Hyde, I will return to the Knoll if you please!" she said with a slight yawn. "It is possible that Mr. Vernon will wait there for me, as I promised to accept his escort back to the village."

"He has doubtless forgotten the engagement, Miss Dolores. You may as well let me be his substitute. I feel sure I will place him under obligations, and I know I will prove quite as agreeable to you. He has scarcely yet recovered from that fit of dullness which drove you from his side."

The fellow said this with a significance that was conclusive proof that he had overheard a part of the conversation which he interrupted.

"Perhaps you are right in both surmises," Dolores negligently responded ; "but I have made the engagement and must fulfill it."

"What if you have? Break it! It is not the first engagement you have broken, I'll wager," he said with a great deal of impudence in his manner.

"Break my word, Mr. Hyde! Surely you would not have me guilty of such dishonor!" she said half indignantly, half in jest.

"A lady's word!" said he, laughingly and mockingly. "What is a lady's word? A thing so brittle that the glance of a bolder eye will shiver it into atoms,—so weak that a fop's whisper, if uttered in a mellower tone than that which evoked its plighting, will crush it into powder! A lady's honor! What is a lady's honor? A substance so vaporous, so dreamlike, so immaterial that it can have no existence, except in a poet's thought, or a woman's conceit!"

"And pray, Mr. Hyde, where is your gallantry?"

She spoke petulantly ; and, then, recovering her good humor, continued in the bantering tone which he had assumed,

"Since you have been so impolite as to give that definition of woman's honor, I will tell you what man's gallantry has gotten to be in this rough age of progress.

Man's gallantry! What is man's gallantry? A poorly preserved relic of a chivalrous era when courtesy was accounted a virtue, and when valor shielded innocence from the rude insults of ignorant coxcombs—a once potent charm of your sex, now a pleasant myth, if I am to judge mankind by the standards of this village!"

And she dropped him a mock courtesy.

Hyde did not wince, although the lash stung! but answered with audacious assurance that trenched almost upon intolerable impudence,

"Mayhap, the immaculate Vernon of spotless honor and comely face, hath this other grace so noble in Miss Vaughn's estimation."

Dolores' face reddened, and she instantly replied,

"Indeed, he has, sir! Would it not be well for you to emulate his virtues? I shall certainly insist that you do so in my presence."

"Good evening, Miss Vaughn!"

"Good evening, Mr. Hyde!"

So Dolores parted from her escort, near the spot where she had parted from Roland a short time before.

"Here is a note for you!" said a small boy approaching her awkwardly, as if abashed at entering the presence of aught so beautiful.

"Thank you, Sammie. Oh! It's from Mr. Vernon. Where is he, do you know?"

"He's gone, Ma'am!"

"Gone! oh!"

If Dolores was a man, the Editor would say this information startled her out of her boots. But as she wasn't, he'll leave the reader to judge its effect.

She hastily unfolded the missive, and read its contents with suspended breath.

Then she groaned; then she wept bitterly; then she shuddered, and wiped her eyes, and endeavored to compose her countenance.

It was Dolores' time now to sit upon the rock where Roland suffered so intensely. She too buried her face in her lap; sorrowed over her lost love; pondered till her head throbbed with maddening pain.

After reading his note she did not blame Roland; but how she reproached her own foolish heart!

"Go seek him and tell him the truth!"

Thus whispered Love, and she would have obeyed that headstrong counsellor.

"Disguise your Grief! He will return!"

And the voice of Pride, offering this advice, overruled Love.

She waited for him to come back; but he did not come. She was disconsolate.

Gradually she grew calm, and bore up more bravely; and betook herself to a second perusal of Roland's note.

It ran thus:

I have realized too late, dear Dolores, that you do not love me; and that I am hopelessly destined to despair. I feel too heart-broken to meet you again; so I beg you to excuse me from fulfilling my engagement with you this evening. I go South to-morrow. Farewell, my darling. May you find another's love worthier of acceptance than that which my spurned heart offered.

ROLAND VERNON.

September 29th, 1859.

"To think that he couldn't see how much I loved him!" she whispered, as she kissed the note. "How blind men are! Oh! oh!"

And she was relieved by another flood of tears.

When it was nearly sundown, Dolores got up, rejoined her female friends whose beaux were men in buckram; and with them went sadly home.

CHAPTER X.

ROLAND went directly to Mr. Fairchild's house, after leaving the mountain; and instantly communicated his intention of accompanying his mother to New York the next day.

It had been his intention to stay in B—— a week longer, and to join Mrs. Vernon in New York, where she purposed spending several days. But now that he was out with Dolores he wanted to get home.

As Roland offered no explanation of his change of plan he excited a good deal of

curiosity among the members of Mr. Fairchild's family as to the cause of his hurried departure; but his reticence on this subject was respected. So, having made all necessary preparations that evening, he left the next morning, leaving behind him a pleasant impression on the mind of his hospitable host, and carrying with him a grateful remembrance of the kindness which had been bestowed on him during his visit, and the esteem and regret of his relatives whom he had seen for the first time during his brief sojourn in Vermont.

About ten days subsequent to their departure from B——, Roland and Mrs. Vernon reached Rushbrook, where they were received with a quiet gladness by its master, and with boisterous demonstrations of pleasure by the servants. Roland found the library fixed as he had requested; and, as he was not quite ready to commence the practice of his profession, he made his headquarters in this pleasant snugery. The comfort of the dear old room, which others had never appreciated before, became so manifest that, at length, Col. and Mrs. Vernon insensibly glided into the habit of joining Roland there, until, after a while, it became the favorite sitting room of the house.

Roland was lounging in his favorite seat in the library, enjoying the twilight calm, about a month after his return to Rushbrook, when his father entered and took a seat by his side.

This was not usual at that hour; so Roland assumed an erect attitude and prepared for business. He did not know what was coming; but that something was about to be sprung upon him, he was confident.

Roland was not mistaken.

Col. Vernon informed him that by Mr. Leigh's will he had inherited about a quarter of a million dollars, in stocks, slaves, lands, and other property; that, as the executor of that will, and as his guardian, the supervision of that estate had been in his, Col. Vernon's, hands; that all debts due by and to the estate had been settled, and that he was ready to account for and turn over the principal, and the profits which had accrued thereon up to date; and reminded him that he was now of age.

Roland intimated that there was plenty of time to talk about such matters.

Col. Vernon held a different opinion; and requested his son to appoint a day for a thorough examination of his accounts, and an inspection of his vouchers; so that the necessary receipts and releases could be handed over to him as a discharge from his responsibility.

Roland impulsively declared that he had no desire to make such an examination; but asked for the receipts that he might sign them at once.

"The idea of my examining your accounts, and inspecting your vouchers! You cannot have so poor an opinion of my affection and gratitude as to believe me capable of so unworthy an action. Of course your accounts and vouchers are right! So what's the use of my looking over them? I couldn't make heads or tails of them anyhow. What do I know of such things? There now!"

This may have been pretty fair logic for a young man who interpreted Reason to mean Feeling; but, for some cause, it failed to convince Col. Vernon.

"But, my son," broke in the old lawyer, "this examination must be made; and immediately. Therefore, you will oblige me by saying when you will make it."

"I don't intend that it shall ever be made!" said Roland, with a wonderful display of firmness in the compression of his lip.

"Enough, sir!" snorted the irate Colonel. "Damn my eyes if I don't file a bill in equity to compel somebody to examine and receipt."

"Don't do *that*!" cried Roland. "If you are bent on an examination, I'll make it or have it made."

"If you are too lazy to do your own work, you would do well to employ John Morrisson. But, if you ever intend to be a lawyer, the drudgery of an inspection of these accounts and vouchers would be of great advantage."

The Colonel growled out this response; and, in no very angelic temper, strode out of the room.

Roland having given in to his father's wishes, now became impatient to get this business off his mind; and, early the fol-

lowing morning went into town to engage the services of the attorney, who the Colonel suggested for the work.

On the Court House Square, in C—town, were a number of small frame buildings, tenanted by gentlemen of the legal profession; and thither Roland made his way; for in one of these offices Mr. John Morrisson held forth—that is to say, wrote deeds, prepared his cases, read law, smoked his pipe, held consultations with his clients, talked slang and did other things pertaining to the practice of his profession.

When Roland stepped into the little portico of the attorney's office, Morrisson, who was engaged in conversation with General Woodruff, and had evidently been drinking with him, rose and met him with a pleasant smile.

"So you have come back to C—town a full-fledged lawyer, Roland? I wish you much success on the Circuit!" said Morrisson, with a hearty shake of the hand; and after Roland had exchanged a greeting with General Woodruff, continuing,

"I'm an old stager, and know the short cuts, my boy; and with your permission, I will give you a little advice."

Roland expressed his thanks, and said he would be happy to receive it.

"It is, Keep steady in the backstep!"

Roland was puzzled; and, at a loss to understand the drift of Morrisson's remark, replied,

"I trust, sir, that I shall do whatever is right and becoming as a member of the profession. Is that what you mean?"

"Not exactly, Roland—not exactly!" responded Morrisson, in a deep sepulchral tone that he always assumed when he had been free in his potations. "No, no! I see that you have a great deal to learn yet, that Judge Pearson has failed to teach you. General Woodruff can tell you what it is to keep steady in the backstep. Ask him what he does when he goes home with thirteen drinks aboard, eyes weak, face flushed, utterance thick, and is met at the door by that paragon of loveliness—Miss Belle."

"Perhaps, you mean that I must not drink any more than I can gracefully carry," suggested Roland.

"Of course, I do! Keep steady in the backstep; or, if you please, carry your li-

quor and don't let it carry you. Take me for your exemplar!"

"I am pleased to be able to say that I am very abstemious in my habits, Mr. Morrisson," and with a penetrating look; "and that I have the greatest abhorrence for drunkenness and drunkards."

"Delighted to hear it, Roland! The great secret of your father's success, and mine, is that both of us are perfectly temperate men."

As if to add its testimony to the truth of this statement, Morrisson's nose blossomed with a brighter carnation hue; and his bloodshot eyes blinked till the blue devils fairly danced on his unsteady glances.

"Yes, Roland," he continued, "your father has always been a marvellously sober man for a lawyer; and I, in spite of the temptations with which I am beset by General Woodruff, have tried to make my life a feeble imitation of his; knowing that through temperance and probity only can eminence at the bar be attained."

"I have heard, Mr. Morrisson, that impudence and self-reliance are great assistants in the struggle for position in the profession; and I am surprised that you have achieved so much distinction with the hindrances of natural modesty and bashfulness to contend against. How have you managed?"

Fairly bit by this shaft from Roland's quiver, Morrisson squirmed in his seat and *sotto voce* remarked to Woodruff.

"Damn the fellow!—He's a chip of the old block. So punctilliously polite: so infernally sharp!"

"Why, Roland, that's a real puzzler! I've talked with the old Colonel about that very thing; and we are pretty well agreed that our rapid rise is due to the facts that we know more law, and have more brains than all the rest of our legal brethren put together. Eh!"

The sly old rascal chuckled; and then added.

"Besides, I had the benefit of General Woodruff's patronage when I first came to the bar. I owe him a great deal."

The General was too far gone to understand that Morrisson was complimenting him, and he muttered out,

"No; you don't owe me any thing—not a cent."

And then he laughed very foolishly.

Roland now expressed his desire to consult Mr. Morrisson on business; and remarked that he presumed it would be preferable for him to call again, next day.

"No. Crack your whip! crack your whip, boy! No better time than now. Will you walk into the back-room?" said Morrisson, brightening up at the prospect of something to do in a business way.

Invited thus, Roland gave Morrisson an insight of the matters which he desired to have him arrange; and received his assurance that he would bestow upon them an immediate attention.

That night Colonel Vernon and Roland were smoking in the library; and in one of the pauses of their conversation the son turned to the father, and inquired suddenly.

"Why in the world did you send me to Mr. Morrisson? He was drunk to-day; and talked in a strain that gave me a very poor opinion of his capacity. Is he a man of any sense?"

"Indeed, he is—a man of excellent mind, and profound reading. But then he is a person of no moral principle, no social position, and might be aptly called a great knave. Still he is a good hearted fellow."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Roland.

"Yes!" continued the Colonel. "He has a curious history too. He was a poor apprentice, but displayed some talent, so as to attract General Woodruff's attention; and he took a fancy to him, educated him, and introduced him to a very fair practice. He had the ability to sustain himself; and now stands well as a sound counsellor and a shrewd advocate. But his genius lies in his quickness to detect a flaw in papers—that was why I sent you to him. If I have made any errors he will be sure to point them out."

"Oh! That was the reason, was it. One would not take him for an educated man. He has a vernacular of his own, that is so full of slang!"

"Yes. But, in the Court-House, he is a master of the mother tongue, and a very forcible speaker. It is really surprising

that a person of such vulgar habits of conversation, should be able to shake them off at will. But *he* can!"

"I don't like him; although he appears to be rather fond of me. He is so coarse!" observed Roland, after a pause.

"Certainly, he is; and unreliable too—still, as I have already remarked, he has a very warm heart!"

And the Colonel refilled his pipe.

"Oh!" said he, starting in his chair, and fumbling in his pocket, and then drawing out a package. "I had nearly forgotten. I have something for you."

"What is it?" asked Roland, quietly.

"You remember the sealed package which Mr. Leigh left for you, to be read upon your reaching your majority? It was placed in my custody, you know. Here it is—I brought it out from the office."

Roland's eyes opened widely. He, too, had almost forgotten. Then, with a mingled look of curiosity and dread, he took it, and held it toyingly in his hands.

After a pause he broke the seal, and commenced to peruse the paper, eagerly; his eyes dilating with wonder as he proceeded.

He had nearly finished reading it, when he bounced from his chair, and involuntarily exclaimed,

"GREAT GOD!"

"What's the matter?" inquired his father.

Roland hesitated; blushed; and then in a tone of filial reverence, slowly said.

"I know, sir, that you will not attribute what I am constrained to do to any ab-

sence of confidence in you; but this letter—I cannot disclose its tenor!"

In a moment, he added.

"I am at liberty to read you this much, however, which will justify my action."

Before he could commence reading, Col. Vernon stopped him, saying warmly.

"I want no explanation, Roland. I prefer that you offer none. If it were proper for you to communicate your secrets to me, I am sure you would not hesitate. Do not proceed, I pray you!"

"But I *must* read you this paragraph. To do so is a part of the obligation imposed by my promise to grandfather."

"Very well—go on!"

"He writes; 'In conclusion, I desire 'to impress you with the necessity of 'guarding the communications which I 'make, with the strictest vigilance, even 'from your father. While I am fully alive 'to the knowledge that his counsel would 'greatly assist you in the performance of 'the responsibility which I have imposed 'upon you, I cannot obtain the consent of 'my judgment to entrust any except one 'of the Leigh blood with these secrets of 'my life; and, that no resemblance of a 'disturbed confidence between you and 'him—for both of you are highly esteemed 'and greatly loved by me—may arise, I 'desire you upon the perusal of this, to 'read this injunction to him.' I regret, sir, that he has made the requirement."

What was it that caused Roland to start so during the perusal of that letter?

It told him that—John Morrisson was his uncle!

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

SCENE: One of the little lawyer's offices on the Court House Square of C—town. TIME: April, 1860. DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: A pair of lawyerlings—one the Entertainer, the other his Guest.

As the Entertainer leans gracefully back in his chair, holding a half closed leather bound volume in his hand, he has an air of dignified repose that is pleasing to the spectator, while there is that in his face, and in the contour of his head, which would instantly strike the eye of the physiognomist and phrenologist. His features are handsome, and indicate frankness, nervousness, and self-reliance; his eyes are bright with a blended tenderness and fire; his forehead is cast in an intellectual mould, and crowned with an abundance of golden hair, which, if worn longer, would cluster in curly profusion about his shoulders. The conformation of his skull proclaims large Individuality, Comparison, Causality, Ideality, Spirituality, Conscientiousness, Benevolence and Self-Esteem, coupled with very large Constructiveness, Combativeness, Adhesiveness, and Order, but these are balanced by small Vitativeness and Veneration, moderate Hope, average Firmness, Acquisitiveness, and Approbativeness. His organs of Secretiveness, Cautiousness and Imitation are insignificantly developed, while large Amativeness and Philoprogenitiveness, with only average Conjugality and Continuity, are, with the rest, under the control of a highly excitable temperament.

The Visitor's face, features, form, all attest the vital power of his structure. The

full hazel eyes, the light, sandy hair, the straight large nose, the firm but sensual expression of the mouth, and the robust frame, capable of great endurance, are in marked contrast with the general exterior of his companion, who is much more delicately built. The large frontal region of his head tells of a fine mental endowment, that is backed by great Veneration though small Benevolence and Conscientiousness; besides, he has very large Firmness and Constructiveness, tempered by quite as much Acquisitiveness, Cautiousness, and Approbativeness; and well developed Human Nature, Self-Esteem, Continuity, and Secretiveness, with but little Amativeness, Conjugality, or Adhesiveness.

"I am glad to learn that you have opened here," remarked the guest; "and I hope that your office may be flocked with clients."

"Ah! thank you!" responded the other. "But I fear both you and I will have to wait a good while first. I see that you too have taken an office on this Row."

"Yes! But, tell me, why in the world didn't you go into partnership with your father! A most excellent opportunity!" curiosity prompted the first speaker to inquire.

"Because I preferred not to grow up under a hot-house culture. I can afford to wait for practice; and I think it will be better for me to do so than to be pushed ahead!" was the quietly offered explanation.

"May your highest ambition be realized! But don't I envy you your ability to wait!" replied the guest with a smack of jealousy in his tone.

"If you will permit me, I will take pleas

ure in advancing any funds that you may need. When you are pushed don't hesitate to command me and my resources!" generously exclaimed the more fortunate professional brother.

"Much obliged! But I trust I shall have no occasion. Good morning!"

And, so saying, Paul Adams rose from his seat and left Roland Vernon to solitude and his books.

In the same classes, both in the preparatory schools, college, and law school, Paul Adams, as in their boyish sports, had been Roland Vernon's persevering rival; and, now that both were at the starting point of their professional careers, when the realities of life were to be grappled with, and the emoluments and honors of triumph were to be struggled for in a sharp wrestle with the world, entertaining similar aspirations, commanding nearly balanced powers, still rivals, and eager for the contest, these young men waited impatiently for the signal of onset.

Vernon was the wealthier, and did not need the paltry gains for which the other sought, but his soul was athirst for fame; yet, while Adams was entirely dependent on his professional labors for support, this served but as a whip to lash his energies into a faster gallop.

Vernon was haughty, though kind-hearted; unpopular, though strictly honorable; irritable, though generous to a lavish degree. Brave, intelligent, candid, affectionate, ambitions.

Adams was bland, but selfish; popular, but without principle; good tempered, but grasping and avaricious. Plucky, smart, sly, calculating, cool, aspiring.

Both were energetic, able, and well educated.

Vernon was a gentleman: Adams was a courtier.

Either had the talent to fill distinguished position. But while Vernon had the integrity to adorn, he lacked the art to secure. On the other hand, Adams had the craft to attain, but was without the probity to merit.

Each knew intuitively that the other was to be his unrelenting competitor in the race for advancement; and each prepared for the contest.

It was to be a long warfare, and Brains were to meet Brains!

"On whose side will victory stand?"

They knew each other's mettle, and asked themselves this question.

"Can it be," thought Vernon, "that Policy and Chicanery are mightier than Principle and Energy?"

"Assuredly," thought Adams, "unscrupulous Diplomacy will achieve more than hard-working Integrity!"

It was a moral doubt which the issue of their warfare was to solve.

The battle was not to be one in which the forces of Intellect preponderating on this side or the other, could give the honors of triumph. They were equally matched; and, as the leaf is driven before the rude blasts of the ruffian wind, so was Destiny to impel them to tramp in their appointed order to the goal, where the grim Tyrant stands, blade in hand, ready to cut down the ranks of the solemn procession of Life as each platoon finishes its weary march.

By descent and social relation Vernon and Adams were representatives of distinct classes. Morally, and in their religions, they were at antipodes.

Vernon came from Norman stock; Adams from Saxon. Vernon was a Cavalier; Adams a Puritan. Vernon was a disbeliever, but clung sublimely to the Golden Rule, and endeavored to do unto others as he wished them to do unto him; Adams was a professor of Christianity, but his faith was not made manifest in his works. Both, constrained by their blood, by the examples given them in their homes, and moulded by an invisible but irresistible influence, illustrated in their lives, their thoughts, their deeds, the impress of birth, association and education.

They were puppets, and danced as Fate pulled the wires. All humanity does the same: it is Nature's irresistible law!

The young lawyers commenced equal, but their progress was unequal.

Vernon, hopeful, persevering and steady, was content to wait for clients: Adams, energetic, full of tact, paying no respect to the time-honored punctilio of the profession, solicited and obtained a class of business that few of his fellows would have accepted.

In the past they had been enemies. But Vernon, whose dislikes, as he grew older, moderated, felt his heart warm towards his rival, and sought to further his interests. Adams' boyish hatred, however, intensified as he advanced in years, although he learned to feign a cordiality which he never entertained. So they stood towards one another.

Nevertheless they were frequently thrown by circumstances into juxtaposition, and partly on account of Vernon's kindliness of disposition, and partly on account of a sort of sullen gratitude which Adams felt towards the man who had saved his life, for a few years they were intimate enough to be put down in Rumor's memorandum-book, as very devoted friends.

And so they got along. Vernon treating Adams kindly—Adams behaving towards Vernon, politely.

And as the months wore away, they repressed the hatred of rivalry, or, at least, disguised it, under the show of mutual regard.

But Vernon's professional prospects grew no brighter; while Adams' became more flourishing.

CHAPTER II.

It will be remembered that Paul Adams had a step-sister—Pretty Alice Reeves!

Alice passed through all the stages of lovely girlhood uncontaminated by the influences that surrounded her in the old clergyman's family.

She blossomed into womanhood with a heart gushing with warmth and generosity; and, with the susceptibility which is ever a characteristic of such sensitive natures, she cherished the fond impression which Roland Vernon's youthful heroism made on her fancy with the utmost tenderness.

Since that day when he carried her in his arms into the study of the Parsonage, while she was deliriously acclaiming his courage and her gratitude, her imagination had pictured him as the embodiment of all

those noble traits of character which woman attributes to her ideal of manly virtue.

The image of this youth, fostered in her guileless heart with such sentiments of admiration and esteem, imperceptibly wielded a marvellous power over her thoughts; and, ere she knew the nature of the passion that was impelling her to a mad idolatry, she learned to love him with all the strength and wildness of girlish and romantic enthusiasm. Without a struggle she yielded the entire mastery of her soul to the creature of her own excited imagination.

Yes, creature of an excited imagination!

For however worthy Roland Vernon may have been of her love—and he was worthy!—it was not this real character before which her soul bowed with a more than oriental idolatry, and at whose feet the treasure of her pure young affections was laid as an oblation of devotion.

With this secret locked in her breast; ashamed that she had given, unsought, the rich wealth of her love; trembling lest she should disclose her feelings in her deportment or conversation; blushing at the delicacy that enjoyed the indulgence of this unchecked fondness, but unwilling to be deprived of the delightful emotions which this sweet consoler gave, she entered society.

And, then, how she was tried!

She was constantly thrown into association with her idol, who never suspected her love; and she soon found it becoming more and more impossible for her to hide the tell-tale glow of pleasure that blushed in her cheek whenever he approached, or addressed her. And, what tortures she suffered!

Alice was not long in realizing that she must either absent herself from all gatherings where the ordeal of a meeting with Roland would be necessary, or that his glances would penetrate beyond the covering that veiled her heart, and he would read the tale inscribed on its tablets.

She acted on this reasoning; resolved to avoid him; and, consequently, recoiled from all intercourse with those of her companions in whose company she had met him oftenest.

Now Roland awoke to the knowledge that her acquaintance had afforded him a

great deal of pleasure. He missed *her*. Then he watched for *her*. Then he became impatient to see *her* upon finding that she was hard to be met.

Suddenly he became aware that she had assisted him to banish Dolores from his thoughts, and that the void in his heart had been in a measure filled by this new friend.

He commenced instituting comparisons between them. He reached the conclusion that he rather liked this unobtrusive girl whose cheerful face, a picture of quiet happiness, was so sweet to gaze upon, and whose manner was so soft and pleasant, better even than the mad-cap hoyden, as changeable as an April day and as lovely, whose flashing beauty and tormenting versatility of reserve and frankness, coyness and boldness, had well nigh destroyed his peace.

So Dolores' star began to decline; and Alice's commenced to rise.

Roland grew uneasy and petulant when he was perfectly satisfied that his anxiety to enjoy Alice's society was unlikely to be gratified. Which was *bad* for Dolores' aspirations!

Next he adopted a habit of taking long rambles in the woods, and singing old love songs, and thinking of Alice. And that was a good sign that he was falling in love with her, or that he was already in love!

These walks, after the habit had been contracted for several weeks, led to something.

He met Alice one afternoon!

She appeared to be pleased to meet with him. He was thrilled with delight.

After separating from her at the Parsonage gate—for he walked home with her—he thought that he had noticed some peculiarity in her manner, an undefinable glimpse of something that gave assurance that he was not regarded with indifference.

He took courage from this; and, as the meeting was such a pleasant one, determined to take the same stroll every afternoon.

Every afternoon for a fortnight he took the walk. But he didn't meet Alice again.

This worried him! But he grew more and more alive to the graces and attractions of which he was deprived by her avoidance

of his attentions. In short, he was madly in love with the woman whose life he had saved. And she was madly in love with her rescuer.

But, all this time, preserver and preserved were in ignorance of the existence of that passion which each had awakened.

In the end, Roland was convinced that Alice was avoiding him, for she abandoned her favorite walks as fast as he found them out. He was exceedingly annoyed. But his love became more intense, as the difficulty of gratifying his longings became more insurmountable. And so things *went*!

He could not fathom the mystery of her perverse avoidance of his attentions.

Oh, Roland! How blind! how ignorant of the lore of woman's heart! Poor, unsophisticated youth!

Still he blundered on; and, blundering, stumbled on a circumstance. Then he was suddenly illuminated with intelligence. His perceptions became clear and he pushed his advantage.

He met Alice one afternoon. She was about to retire hastily. He saw that this was his time to find out the cause of her quickness to fly from his presence. Seeing, he did not hesitate to interrogate.

Approaching her with a quick impulsive step, he fastened his frank bold eyes on her face and extended his hand, with a salutation.

Alice took it; glanced shyly at him; blushed; dropped her eyes; and stood trembling while he questioned:

"What have I done to offend you, Miss Alice? Why do you shun me? It is hard to be deprived of your society without knowing what misdemeanor has merited the penalty!"

She was startled at the directness and earnestness of the question; and confusedly replied,

"Nothing, sir! I'm sure you must be jesting!"

Roland looked at her a moment, as if he would read her uncoined thoughts, and then asked,

"Have you answered me candidly? Haven't I provoked your anger?"

"No, sir!" was the trembling response.

"Why, then, do you run from me whenever you see me approaching. For two

months I have been seeking you, yet you are averse to talking with me. Whenever I meet you, as soon as you politely can do so, you withdraw. Surely you must have some reason for this!"

She was silent; but her heart beat with tumultuous throbs. Roland continued,

"I have no desire to persecute you with my attention, Miss Reeves; but I think I deserve to know the character and extent of my offense. And I *must* know! I value your esteem too highly to forfeit it without an effort for its retention."

Alice's frame shook with agitation; the roses bloomed in her cheeks; her bosom heaved with great billows of emotion, like the tempest-beaten sea, swelling and falling under the lashings of a furious storm.

A moment's pause. Then the artless girl, with a rare simplicity, spoke from her heart,

"Oh! Mr. Vernon!" she cried. "Forgive me, forgive me! I did not shun you for any thing of that sort. I am deeply grateful to you; I owe you every thing! I—I—Oh! I cannot tell you why—I cannot!"

Her manner disclosed every thing. Her carefully guarded tenderness came out so plump, that he—thick skulled fellow!—he even, was relieved of all doubt.

When she broke down, shrunk from his glances, and buried her face in her hands, to hide her blushes and tears, he gave way to the first impulse, and caught her in his arms, and placed her red, hot, tear-stained cheeks against his breast, smoothed her fair tresses, whispered low spoken words in her ears, and kissed the shame from her face, though two bright burning spots remained in the centre of her cheeks, as a foil for the love-light that glittered in her eyes.

Alice's long day-dreams were realized!

Roland put off the old love; and put on the new. And he was happy!

Let Roland and Alice enjoy the delight of their worthily bestowed love; nor disturb their happiness. The twilight stars, dancing merrily above their heads, as they walked homewards, shone upon it approvingly, and lent their softest beams to enhance the enchanted beauty with which

their joy-brimming eyes invested the world that night.

Be not inquisitive as to the meaning of their languishing glances, mutually bestowed; nor endeavor to eavesdrop the gentle words and mellow tones that thrilled their willing ears!

Enough, it is, to know, that neither of them would have exchanged Earth for Heaven, if the translation would have cost a separation of their intertwined hearts.

O Youth! O Love! O witching hour of twilight! How sweet ye are, ye inspirers of earthly happiness!

CHAPTER III.

CORRESPONDENCE

(From Mr. Roland Vernon to Rev. Jacob Adams.)

RUSHBROOK, May 7, 1860.

DEAR SIR:

I would be pleased to receive an intimation from Mrs. Adams, whether, in the event of my securing a promise of the hand of her daughter, Miss Alice Reeves, in marriage, she will seal the engagement with her approbation.

I am aware that you entertain other than kindly sentiments towards me; and, therefore, I feel constrained to ask that, in the event that Mrs. Adams refuses her sanction, she will favor me with an explicit avowal of the considerations which control her decision. This will obviate unnecessary delay, as it will place me in a situation to rebut, and, perhaps, overcome any unfounded prejudices which may be arrayed against me to prevent the happiness to which I aspire.

Of course, I should feel that I was doing violence to my honor, if I were to disregard a well considered and justly urged obstacle.

Very truly, yours, etc.,

ROLAND VERNON.

To Rev. JACOB ADAMS,

C—town, N. C.

(*Reply of Rev. Jacob Adams to Mr. Roland Vernon.*)

PARSONAGE,
C—TOWN, N. C., May 9, 1860.

ROLAND VERNON, Esq.,
Rushbrook.

DEAR SIR:

The subject-matter of your communication, of the 7th inst., has been considered by Mrs. Adams.

In reply, I respectfully submit that we learn from various sources that during your stay at the University, you were free in the expressions of a rationalism in religion, which is irreconcilable with a faith in the doctrines of Christianity; and that we esteem this fact to be a sufficient reason for withholding our consent from your future intimacy with our daughter.

It would be too much for us to expect you to sacrifice your opinions respecting such an important matter, when they have doubtlessly been formed with due deliberation; and, consequently, we must decline the honor which it was your purpose to confer upon our family.

Very respectfully, etc.,

JACOB ADAMS.

(*From Mr. Roland Vernon to Miss Alice Reeves.*)

RUSHBROOK,
Night, May 9, 1860.

MY PRECIOUS ALICE:

The note has been sent, and the answer has been received. I enclose both.

I think Mr. Adams' reply lacks frankness; and I am not disposed to regard his refusal. I will take an appeal to your mother's gratitude and to your own trusted heart. You must talk with your mother, and ascertain her unbiassed opinion. If she is misrepresented by him, of course we will not allow his spite to interfere with our happiness. Will you *pump* her at once, and communicate the result? Please do, my darling!

As respects my religious convictions you need no information. I have spoken with you frankly on that subject. That matter resolves itself into these questions: Can

you trust my honor? Will you be satisfied to have me live out my golden rule, without caring, so I do my duty, what philosophy guides me to its performance? Have you confidence in my love?

Everything depends, therefore, on your mother's feelings; and on the extent of your trust in me.

Believe my darling that I love, and miss you; and that I will wait impatiently to hear from you whether I am to be supremely blest; or to be consigned to unfathomable and eternal misery.

Fondly,

ROLAND.

MISS ALICE REEVES,
Parsonage.

(*Reply of Miss Alice Reeves to Mr. Roland Vernon.*)

PARSONAGE, May 10th, 1860.

O dear! what a time I have been having all the morning! You ought to be a very nice, well behaved fellow, when they are all down so hard on poor me, because I lo—I shall not tell you, sir. There now! Don't ever talk about scolding to me! I think I know the meaning of that word *now*—but didn't I catch it on all sides! And to think that mother should have been against you too. I'm right angry with *her*. The idea! after pretending to think so much of you; and then when you wanted her friendship, to go to abusing you with the rest. Heigho! here comes mother now. I'll have to finish this in the afternoon. I'll *pump* her now. What a word!

* * * * *

Oh, Roland! What do you think? Mother has been in here to tell me a secret, and it affects *us* too. She wasn't so bad after all; but, oh! how deceitful every body is getting! Don't be too impatient, you dear old thing; and be at the old Oak at six *exactly*; and, *maybe*, I'll tell you something nice. I can't write it; so I suppose I shall have to come and tell you. But I can tell you one thing, Mr. Roland Vernon; and I'm in earnest too—*young ladies' hands are not made to be squeezed to death!*

Please forgive me, if I've said anything to tease you; and accept a million of kisses, I won't send them either.

ALICE.

CHAPTER IV.

No effort was made by Roland and Alice to disarm the prejudices of Mr. Adams. They knew that such an endeavor would prove fruitless, and cost them humiliation without securing a fit recompense.

But the lovers continued their intimacy. The assignation of the Old Oak, appointed in Alice's somewhat inexplicit letter to Roland, discovered that Mrs. Adams did not concur with her husband's views respecting the proposed alliance; and that, together with Alice's assurances that she could trust her lover, Infidel though he was, to respect his obligations as a man, and as a husband, if it ever came to that, fixed Roland in his determination not to regard the old minister's prohibition of the engagement.

With characteristic frankness, Roland advised Alice to communicate her intentions to her stepfather by announcing that she only waited until the completion of her twenty-first year to have the ceremony of marriage celebrated.

Alice did this; and, at the same time, signified her willingness to be deprived of Vernon's society in the interval, if Mr. and Mrs. Adams were disposed to demand this sacrifice.

The solicitude of Mrs. Adams' motherly love for the daughter's health and happiness, prevailed over the clergyman's perverseness; and this self denial was not required.

Yet Vernon did not visit his betrothed at the Parsonage. Since the day he had entered that house with Alice in his arms, rescued from a horrible death by his coolness and valor, and received such a rude welcome at the hands of its master, his foot never crossed the inhospitable threshold.

But this did not separate these inter-

blended hearts. They rode together; walked together; and were the fonder and happier for the slight barrier which kept them from a closer familiarity.

In the course of time a shadow fell across their lives — a dark menacing shadow.

Paul Adams began to plot. And, as he was a born intriguer, he inflicted a brief but poignant grief upon Roland and Alice.

Paul perceived that his father's opposition placed no check upon their happiness; and told him that he was a blunderer; that interference by parents only strengthened and purified attachments easily undetermined, except when nourished by the food on which martyrs flourish.

He offered to manage the business better; and, Mr. Adams having a high opinion of his son's talent, gave him the power of attorney to break off this detested match.

Paul entered upon the work with all the vim of enthusiastic youth. He labored in the cause *con amore*. He performed his promise with an untiring and prompt energy, and with beautiful adroitness.

If Paul Adams had any other motive than a native predisposition to malicious trickery supplied, it must have been his inexorable dislike for his competitor in the struggle for professional distinction.

His first movement in the campaign against the lovers, was a pretense of deep sympathy. He simulated this feeling with such admirable tact that Vernon was completely blinded as to his real sentiments.

His next stroke — a mixture of cold-blooded villainy and sublime audacity — told heavily.

He dropped into Vernon's office one day, after his scheme was carefully matured; and entered into familiar and pleasant conversation with his intended victim.

"I hope you feel buoyant in these dull times," he said. "This summer weather enervates one wofully, and then business is always so stagnant during the heated season."

"Yes," cheerfully responded Vernon. "But then you don't seem to mind it, and ought not. You always seem to have enough to keep you busy! Surely, you don't suffer from *ennui*!"

"Very seldom! But sometimes I do, I confess; and, you know, I have to rely on

my work mainly for my pastime. I'm not so fortunate as to enjoy the recourse you have—I don't take with the ladies. I envy you, Vernon! you seem to be quite a favorite!"

"No blarney, Adams!" remonstrated Roland, flushing like a young girl.

"*Apropos*," remarked Adams, suddenly, as if he just recollected a piece of information. "Alice is quite unwell. I fear she will be confined to the house for several days. I presume, however, that she will acquaint you of her convalescence, promptly, so that those drives and walks will not be disturbed any longer than is positively necessary."

Stopping to give Roland a nudge, and to take a hearty laugh, he proceeded:

"Hadn't you better call at the Parsonage as you pass? Perhaps Allie may be well enough to receive you! Pshaw! Don't shake your head. Why do you mind father's crotchets—he'll come round all right yet!"

When Paul told Roland of Alice's sickness, the devoted young lover was very much distressed; and this distress made its sign on his face.

Adams saw that he had said quite enough to serve his purpose, and immediately took his departure.

The fellow chuckled when he got out of sight. He felt confident of success.

Vernon did not call that afternoon to take his customary walk with Alice. Nor the next; nor the next; nor the next; nor for several days. Adams called every morning and regretted that Alice was still very unwell.

Then luck gave the schemer another lift. Mrs. Vernon wanted to do some shopping in town, and rode in from Rushbrook with Roland. He had nothing else to do, so he accompanied her from store to store. Adams saw them, and his quick mind seized on this circumstance. He rubbed his hands with great glee; and that evening he went home pregnant with a purpose, feeling surer than ever of triumph.

Alice was sitting on the piazza sewing. She had been making preparations for the celebration of the National Anniversary, the approaching week; for there was to be a grand ball at night, and Paul was to de-

liver the oration in the forenoon. Consequently, although she had missed her walks with Roland, and had wondered why he kept away, she had been too busy to fret about his remissness.

When Paul joined her, she was thinking of Roland, and wondering whether he was sick. There was a slight shade of disappointment on her face; for she had fully expected that Roland would come for her that afternoon, and he had failed.

She started with surprise, therefore, when Paul inquired, with a well assumed air of nonchalance,

"Sis., who is that lady Roland Vernon has been promenading the streets with all day? She is certainly very handsome!"

At first she was astounded; then attributing Roland's failures to call for her to this lady that Paul asked about, she waxed indignant; then she tossed her head with a lofty disdain, while a gleam of jealousy shot from her eyes, and replied,

"I'm sure I cannot imagine! What does she look like? What sort of dress and bonnet did she wear?"

"Oh! I don't know! But she was very pretty. I declare he's a fortunate fellow—all the lovely women fall in love with him!"

"Oh! They do? That's a compliment for me, I suppose!"

Saying this, she sprang up and ran into the house, and, rushing up stairs to her room, entered and locked the door, and cried.

Paul whistled "Old Dan Tucker" vigorously; and patiently waited for his plot to work out its results.

For two or three days more Roland did not go for Alice; and, her jealousy aroused, she became wrathfully bitter against him in her thoughts.

The afternoon of the 3d of July, Adams dropped in on Vernon and casually remarked that Alice was better and would probably be out the next day, and would certainly attend the ball. He did this to prevent detection.

Roland immediately wrote her a note and informed her that he would provide her an escort for the ball, as he could not come for her himself; and that he was delighted at the prospect of meeting her on

the morrow. He anticipated no reply and got none.

All that night and all next day—for Alice did not go to hear the oration—he looked forward with pleasant anticipations to the ball. She would be there. He would see her. He would tell her how deeply he had sympathized with her during her illness. He would show her the depth of his devoted love. They would be the happiest of mortals.

Ah! would they?

Her jealousy was wide awake; and she sat, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," waiting to sting him with her disdain—sat, in a conspicuous place in the ball-room, where he would be certain to see her as soon as he entered, crouching to make a spring. The little tigress!

The lights gleamed brightly. Beauty shone. Eyes sparkled. Tongues rattled. A flash of wit, now and then, set a coterie in a roar. A handsomely turned compliment made lovely cheeks blush scarlet. Exquisites flourished. Coquettes were in their glory; but patted their little feet impatiently, waiting for the dancing to commence. Laughter and small talk were at a premium.

Roland Vernon entered with a lady on his arm. Alice looked up, and, seeing who it was, smiled her a look of greeting. Evidently she had expected him to bring some one else. But her jealousy was not yet exercised. And she waited for her opportunity—waited not quite so savagely. But she was a little tigress still!

Roland soon came up to her, all raptures and smiles. She did not observe his approach—so she pretended. He spoke to her. She did not hear his salutation—so she feigned. He was puzzled.

But true love is not easily put off!

He persisted in his efforts to attract her attention—and succeeded.

"Oh! Mr. Vernon! What an honor!"

Roland was stumped. What did it mean? Why was Alice so freezingly cold?

"I'll find out!"

And, having formed this resolution, he did not waste any time, but stood watching his chance for a private word.

It was a fight between jealousy and inno-

cent true love—both armed *cap-a-pie*, and plucky.

A crusty old maid would have delighted to watch its progress. He bent on commanding her ear. She equally bent on refusing to listen.

But in the end innocent true love won the victory. It was like the victories of many great conquerors—empty, without fruits, and horrible for the victor.

"Alice, my precious Alice!" he whispered. "What is the matter? Do you feel unwell, darling, or—are you angry with me? What have I done to merit this coldness?"

The little tigress crouched low; fixed a wild eye, full of menace, on his face; and made a spring.

"Oh! you are so condescending, Mr. Vernon! I thought you had found so much delight in the society of other ladies, recently, that you had forgotten my existence entirely. I am so pleased to see that you still remember me! But, as I fear my poor attractions are not sufficiently fascinating to claim your homage, I will not detain you from the enjoyment of conversation with others, who, I am sure, will prove more entertaining."

She nodded her dismissal.

Cut to the quick by her manner and her words, Roland, with a look of contempt, hastily retired—TO CURSE ALL WOMAN-KIND!

CHAPTER V.

For a few minutes Roland leaned heavily against one of the row of great festooned pillars running across the dancing hall, and gazed vacantly on the joyous scene.

Then, as if oppressed by the proximity of Alice, he turned and passed through the fashionable crowd which had assembled from all the neighboring country, nodding pleasantly to the right and left as he recognized his acquaintances in the midst of the dense throng.

He stopped here to exchange a laughing word with this bright-eyed brunette;

paused there to compliment that shrinking blonde, whose face reddened at his handsomely uttered praises and whose melting glances grew tender and drooped when they encountered his admiring gaze. But he wearied of sustaining so difficult a part—he sighed to escape all the allurements that were being used to detain him. His heart was not engaged in the pleasures which they were enjoying. His soul was faint; and, sickened with their mirth, he moved on mechanically.

Thirsting for the fresh air, longing for solitude in the quiet moonlight, where he could think unwatched, and undisturbed by the crazing din of the revel, he pressed his way through mazes of crinoline to the open door.

He made a bolt, and ran against a couple entering at that moment.

The glare of the chandeliers flashed in their faces; and there was a mutual recognition.

The lady whom he escorted to the ball, hung on the arm of Roland's friend, Jock Wright.

"O you truant!" she cried. "Where have you been hiding? Grew tired of me in exactly ten minutes! Very well, sir, I'll know the next time you send me a properly expressed *billet*, written on the most immaculate gilt-edge, that 'the pleasure of being commanded' means that my command is to be exercised ten minutes only—ten by the watch!"

"Now, Miss Belle," he answered with a smile, "don't you know that you have been listening to Jock's love-making with a thousand-fold more relish than you would have enjoyed my dull chattering? Bravo! bravo! both of you are blushing! Did she make you inexpressibly happy, Wright?"

"Come, sir! You can't escape by a resort to badinage. I've fairly captured you, disengaged, not a lady in the house having a previous claim; and you shall dance with me the next cotillion."

"But, what's poor Jock to do?"

"Never mind him! Come, they are about to commence the dance!"

Music's "voluptuous swell" wooed them to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet." And they chased!

The sweet strains ceased; the nimble

dancers took their seats. Jock Wright hurried to Miss Belle Woodruff's side; and Roland made his exit. This time he got out into the yard, and fled from the crashing noise of the music and the tramping of the dancers. But his brain whirled; and the control over his feelings which his pride had enabled him to assert, gave way. He thought, now, of nothing but his spurned love.

Once in the yard he left the paths that meandered through the shrubbery in front of the College building, in which the festivities were being celebrated, and advanced to the centre of one of the flower-bounded squares. Here he flung himself upon the ground and gave utterance to a deep groan of agony. The spangled canopy, as far as it could be seen, resting its edges on the dark horizon, glimmered with bright twinkling stars. But their resplendence did not allure his gaze. He went not to watch; but to think. And, pondering, he brooded until he grew desperate in the attempt to solve the mystery of Alice's demeanor, so changed, so terrible, so fatal to his hopes of bliss.

What had he done? Nothing, literally, nothing! She had flagrantly insulted him, she had insolently driven him from her side.

Cavalier Haughtiness drew the strong sword of Indifference; and resolved to wield it relentlessly!

"Why Vernon, is this you? What are you doing? Surely, you hav'n't been floored too—you, certainly, have not been made the victim of a woman's caprice, as I have been? No such bad luck for you, I hope!"

"What are you raving about, Wright? How in the devil did you find me?"

Roland spoke angrily. He thought Jock Wright's intrusion was induced by a knowledge of his discomfiture; and that he was there to sport with his unhappiness.

"Damn it, man, hasn't a fellow a right to rave when he's been politely but firmly rejected by the handsomest woman in Carolina? As for finding you, I stumbled on you—I CAME OUT HERE TO THINK!"

"What! Has Belle refused you, in fact?"

"Nothing less!"

"Why?"

"I don't know! She says she's not engaged, but that her affections are. I'll bet a hundred dollars she's in love with you. With all your intolerable pride and abruptness, there's something in you that wins all the women's hearts."

"For a moment—once in your life—please be serious. I'm in no mood for nonsense!"

"But, Vernon, I was never more earnest in my life. I'm flooded, that's certain!"

"And so am I,—worse than flooded!"

Roland and Jock exchanged confidences; and a comparison of notes convinced each that the other was a much wronged man.

"Well," said Jock. "Don't let's allow either of the wretches to think that *we* care. I'm for returning to the ball-room, and getting vengeance out of some other girl. Will you go?"

"Not now!" And then, reconsidering, "Yes, by Jupiter, I'll join you. Go ahead!"

In the ball-room, and surrounded by a throng of admirers, Belle Woodruff was reigning without a rival. Roland Vernon edged himself into a position near her, and soon, with a strange light in his eye, and with a wild laugh that echoed loudly through the wide hall, he paid his homage, his voice rising above the din of other tongues as he excelled them all in creating mirth and gayety. This light demeanor he continued to manifest throughout the evening, giving no external exhibition of the unrest and suffering that raged in his bosom, except in the unnatural exhilaration of his manner. But his heart was torn with anguish, crushed, and bleeding; and a fever of delirium coursed with his excited blood. He could disguise, but he could not forget his maddening grief; and, better, he could make Alice share his sorrow, although he did not know how deeply she deplored the words that had banished him from her side.

As Alice watched him, suffering tortures of Jealousy, her heart grew sick at the sight of his tempestuous hilarity. She knew that it was assumed; but she thought it was assumed to punish her.

And so these true lovers, separated by a cruel scheme, the victims of a plotter's

wiles, made themselves miserably wretched. O Love! Thou tormentor; thou benefactor!

At last the dancing was over. The banquet hall was deserted. The ladies huddled into the dressing-rooms for their wrappings. The gentlemen crowded in the passages, waiting for the fair ones to start home.

"Go it, Roland! The field is clear!" Jock Wright confidentially whispered in Vernon's ear, as he waited in the doorway.

"What do you mean?" asked his friend with a puzzled expression.

"Mean! Why, I mean that Belle Woodruff is in love with you, and that you should take advantage of her humor. There's nothing like a new love, or even a flirtation, to heal a lacerated heart!"

Amused at Wright's earnestness, Roland laughed in his face.

"It's so!" Jock protested. "You know I am not made of the sort of stuff that pines. Well, when Belle Woodruff refused me, to get over the embarrassment gracefully, I said, with the straightest face you ever saw—'Miss Belle, if you are right certain you can't love me, and if you positively refuse to let me love you, I suppose I may as well fulfill my promise to Roland Vernon.' Then she flushed up and asked me—'And what was that?' 'Oh!' said I, 'he's a shame-faced fellow, and is too bashful to speak for himself. He told me to ask you if he mayn't love you, *just a little!*' I expected her to laugh, of course; and thought I'd effect a brilliant escape under the cover of her merriment; but, sir, if you believe me, the first time in her life, she blushed to the eyebrows, and looked as serious as a Quaker girl at meeting. It's so! I'll wager my life that you've touched her heart—that is, if she's got any! I'd advise you to dash ahead. She's —"

"— Mr. Vernon! Ah! I'm ready!" There stood the young lady herself, equipped for the ride home. She appeared on the scene just in time to leave her quondam lover in perplexity as to whether she had overheard his remarks, or not. But he was not annoyed long. What if she had?

Jock Wright was not the man to allow small matters to worry him. If he had

been, he would have died, a year before, from the effect of about twenty mittens which this same young lady had considerably given him.

Oh, no! He wasn't made of that sort of stuff!

A brimming cup to you, and the like o' you, Jock Wright! A health! A thousand healths.

CHAPTER VI.

DRIVING along at a rapid pace, with Belle Woodruff seated by him, thinking of what gleeful Jock Wright had said, before he got to The Meadows, Roland Vernon was well nigh convinced of the correctness of the surmises of his friend.

Roland was not overwhelmingly vain; but he had not failed to perceive, or to think that he had perceived, that Belle, who was so frivolous with others, so irrepressible in her humor, so reckless in her gayety, invariably assumed a moderation and depth of feeling in her conversation with him when they were thrown together alone, that he could not account for, except by flattering his own self-love with the thought that he had the power to evoke the earnestness and soul which was generally wanting in her intercourse with the rest of the world.

In society her raillery was levelled at him mercilessly; and her demeanor as unrestrained by emotion as with any other gentleman who was on the same footing of social intimacy.

When the world looked not upon her, however, and she communed with him, unrestrained by that artificial strength which panoplies a woman when she feels that she is watched by the argus-eyed Coterie of which she is a member, all the tenderness of her spoilt nature, bursting the bonds of formality, shone in her looks, and mellowed her words.

But, while Roland Vernon thought thus, he did not act upon Jock's suggestion. He hoped that Alice would hasten to remove the barrier to their happiness; and his af-

fection was too deeply rooted to be extirpated by a single stroke of unkindness; his passion was not so ephemeral that it would die out entirely in a single night.

His nature however, was an elastic and nervous one; much of the sort that easily recovers from a heart blow, and, perhaps, "new love, or even a flirtation" would have healed his "lacerated heart." Yet he was not quite sure that it was necessary to resort to so desperate a remedy as the putting of his peace at the mercy of this Miss Incurability, by whose side he was riding slowly in the dawning. Besides, daybreak is not a propitious hour for a new love's birth.

And so Roland parted with Belle at the front door of The Meadows mansion, having stepped on her dress three times in his walk from the gate to the house, and caught an indignant glance of a bold black eye for each transgression.

Can some gentleman reader explain why it is that party-dresses are invariably trampled upon by their sex?

An over-curious little lady asks the Editor to inquire! And he obeys!

"The maiden splendor of the morning star shook in the steadfast blue" as Roland Vernon made his way towards Rushbrook; and, as he was not out of bed at the hour etiquette appoints for morning calls, he did not make his obeisance to the beauty of The Meadows the next day, to inquire if her dissipation had resulted deleteriously. This was very well; for the beauty of The Meadows was, herself, asleep at that fashionable hour.

Dancing, in July, is exhausting!

Although Belle knew that Roland Vernon had been in love with a Northern girl at the time of his settlement in C—town to commence the pursuit of his profession, from having heard Mrs. Vernon teasing her son about his Vermont sweetheart, she was induced to believe that he was fancy free and a legitimate subject for her powers of conquest.

In childhood, a frequent visitor at Rushbrook, Roland's playmate, and when she grew older his boyhood's sweetheart, Belle had always cherished a secret fondness for him, and acknowledged to herself, when she searched her heart to learn its secrets, that she would be happier if she could

arouse in his bosom a sentiment akin to that which time had strengthened in her's since her emergence into womanhood.

Belle was not a gossip; and had little tolerance for those of her sex who move and live, and have their being in an atmosphere of scandal. Since the opening of spring she had not been to the village, and knew nothing of the rumors of Roland's devotion to Alice Reeves.

Belle was lovely, sprightly, intelligent and wealthy—a fit lady for a prince—and she was aware of her eligibility to be the wife of any man in Carolina. The one objection to her—General Woodruff's habits of intemperance—could easily be overcome even by the most fastidious suitor. Because, even when the General drank to excess, he never forgot what was due to the family of which he was the representative and head.

Knowing the value of her own personal and social attractions, it is not to her discredit that she aspired to become the wife of her old playmate, Roland Vernon, although he was the handsomest, wealthiest, and, perhaps, the most talented young gentleman on the Cape Fear.

To encourage this aspiration she had one or two cheering facts in her possession. Vernon's friends were persuading him to marry. Vernon, himself, had always been attentive, intimate, and fond of her. Vernon had expressed his purpose to gratify the wishes of his parents by marrying in the next twelve months. And, so encouraged, she put forth her utmost charms in the effort to fascinate him and evoke a declaration to which she had, for years, confidently looked forward.

But for this vanity or presentiment, perhaps, she would have given her hand to frank Jock Wright, who was unfortunately so clever, so entertaining, so popular with all the ladies, that he could not find one, although he tried many, who was heartless enough to rob her very dear friends of the delight which the glorious fellow's gallantry gave the entire sex.

But, with the prospect of a proposal from Vernon, she could not think of taking Jock.

And in this mind, were Roland and Belle during the month of July, 1860.

August brought a slight change, Vernon's love for Alice Reeves having moderated, and Belle's charms having made a good

impression. She grew confident of winning the stake.

September came and nearly passed, and then the sparring was at an end. Belle saw at her feet a suppliant one! Roland looked up into eyes that spake love again!

Man's heart is a curiously constructed thing! Once fill it, whether with an image, or a passion, or even a memory, and ever afterwards, like Nature, it abhors a vacuum! If we love, and our idol is torn from us, we are at once possessed with a longing for a substitute, and are dissatisfied and discontented until we have a new love, or a new idol, or until the memory of the old supplies its place. While, all things being equal, we prefer our first love, our first idol; if they cannot be enjoyed, we catch at the next that offers right fairly, investing it, presently at least, with the same romantic interest and lavishing upon it the same wealth of tenderness and devotion. The higher strung the more sensitive the nervous system, and the more poetic and ethereal the nature of a man is, the more unstable, though strong, the more evanescent though deep and concentrated will be his affections; and the easier will it be for him to replace, with new images, the recollections of old yearnings and the regrets in which their memories are embalmed. But, then, these are quite as apt to become the subsequent victims of the banished!

Reading humanity by the type which has been chosen—the type presented in Roland Vernon's character—this moral has been found. Perhaps it will not be sustained upon a universal application.

At any rate, such was the case with Roland. The second time his soul cried out for woman's sympathy to satisfy a craving occasioned by woman's slights. The second time he abandoned an old love and found a new. Fickle Roland! the ladies will cry. Sensible Roland! positively asserts the Editor.

Early in October they plighted their words; the houses of Vernon and Woodruff were to be united in the spring. And there was rejoicing at Rushbrook, and there was happiness at The Meadows!

But, as ever, alas! Felicity cost Woe! Joy reigned under one roof-tree and cheered with her voice and smile: Sorrow crouched

by another hearthstone, weeping and chilling with her blinding tears!

Alas! why does not the food of Contentment drop from the heavens in abundant showers so that all Creation may once feast together and join in the sweet concord of a gleeful thanksgiving?

While Belle Woodruff rejoiced, Alice Reeves sorrowed! While Belle revelled in rosy dreams, Alice was sleepless and Agony tore her miserable heart!

Alas! this is the way of Fate!

CHAPTER VII.

PAUSE here!

Revert, for a moment, to the distressed girl, who, waking too late to an appreciation of her folly, saw the sweet hopes that clustered around her bright reveries, suddenly dispelled.

Dolores Vaughn paid a severe penalty for indulging an idle caprice. Instead of rejoicing over the realization of a fondly fostered anticipation of reciprocated Love, she was doomed to wrestle with a crushing disappointment.

Returning home from Mount Antony, she sought her chamber, and in its solitude wept bitter, bitter tears, reproaching herself in this moment of abandonment to grief, with the confession that she had merited the loss of that affection with which she had so inexcusably trifled.

But women are hopeful; and Dolores clung with a steadfast tenacity to the cheering conviction that Roland would discover his mistake and come to her once more, offering the coveted treasure whose loss she deplored. Yet, she was nevertheless harassed with the fear that he would depart without seeking another interview, even while flattering herself with the belief that he was not wholly lost.

The hours passed and the time for retiring came, yet she did not realize her expectation. Roland had not sought her to say, Farewell.

The next day she heard that he was gone; and then her heart gave a great

throb, and the blinding tears came to her eyes, and she sorrowed as one without hope.

Conscience reproached her; but, alas! these reproaches came too late to save her from the error that cost her the misery which caused her grief! Time passed away slowly, at first; but, at length, after the earth had made many revolutions, brighter days followed serenely nights, and Resignation gave Patience, Fortitude and Peace.

But Roland Vernon's image was not effaced from the tablet of her memory!

Soon it was Winter: The exciting Winter of 1860-'61. The people of the United States were filled with apprehensions by the rumblings of that Revolution, which, fostered and augmented in its fierceness by vexations and bitter animosities long germinating but latent—was to culminate in April in the terrific contest which sundered a nation and introduced with a thirst for bloodshed and a taste for carnage, the vilest passions of Humanity—Shermanic violence of pseudo-patriotism, agrarianism, license, and savagery; but which also evoked devoted zeal and heroic self-abnegation.

The prediction of the Abolitionist, Carson, which had provoked Roland's defiance months before, was about to have the fulfillment of realized prophecy.

In the Southern States, a maddened populace was driving incendiarism wrathfully back to its home north of the Potomac; in the Northern States excited mobs were hunting down obnoxious citizens and using the moral suasion of Menace to educate slow minds to that acme of progressive Republicanism which has recently succeeded in supplanting Conservatism and law-abiding Loyalty with Popular Despotism and other fruits of fanatical Party Spirit.

The hot breath of War was borne upon the wings of the breezes; and the atmosphere became poisonous with the growing, but then indistinct, smell of gunpowder.

The father of Dolores Vaughn was a Democrat of the severest school of States Rights, in his party affiliations. He steadily opposed the Free Soil movement from its inception. He won the epithet, Dough-Face, from his political adversaries by his

bold denunciations of the Disunion schemes of the Republicans. Now, amid the discordant clamor of sectional bitterness, his voice pealed like a clarion for Peace, and for Equal Justice under the Constitution.

A few of Mr. Vaughn's neighbors and kinsmen stood with him; but they were environed by a phalanx of opposition. Detraction aspersed, and threatenings assailed them from every quarter. They were marked: and their lives were in peril.

Still they were unmoved, unterrified by the hissing storm that howled around them. They listened calmly to the roar of its resounding thunders, and dared its blasting lightnings to strike.

But it was the struggle of the one against the many. In the end it was to have its issue in the defeat of the weak, the triumph of the strong.

Mr. Vaughn saw this, knew what was to be the cost of maintaining the Right, and had the wisdom to provide for the emergency which was fast becoming inevitable.

He sold his farm; had a trying scene with his wife and daughter; listened patiently to their expostulations that it was safe for them to stay where it was safe for himself; told them resolutely that they *must* leave Vermont; and then sent them to the South, to find a hospitable place of refuge in the family of an old school-mate, until they could return home without danger, or until, if the war was a protracted one, they could make a home there for themselves.

Then he folded his arms, and waited to be martyred. And he was!

CHAPTER VIII.

ROLAND VERNON found himself entangled in a most disagreeable dilemma after he had been engaged to Belle Woodruff a few weeks—a dilemma that made him miserable, and caused him to spend the months of October, November, and December in an unquiet state of mind, nearly bordering on insanity.

It was his chief ambition to be a man of

honor. He had no respect for the estimates the world places on men, and did not court its applause; but, on that single point he was peculiarly sensitive, and would have cheerfully yielded all he had of wealth, position, hope, rather than have been subjected to a suspicion that he was capable of doing any but a high-toned act, or thinking any but a high-toned thought.

This may have been the sensitiveness of youth and inexperience—a very unfashionable sensitiveness in these days of enlightenment. But it was far from being discreditable to his heart.

Yet he was on the brink of bringing the suspicion, which above all others he dreaded most—the suspicion of duplicity down upon his innocent head.

This fear distracted him, and he fled from the society of his friends. To escape the vigilant eye of his betrothed he journeyed away from home, and was absent several weeks, travelling from place to place in the endeavor to make this troublesome ghost down at his bidding. But he travelled in vain; his torture was only intensified by solitude, increased by absence from home; and he lived in a constant terror of humiliating exposure.

A few days before Christmas he returned to Rushbrook the thin, gaunt shadow of his happier self; returned in a condition of mind more fearful than when he left home, hoping to forget the haunting, tormenting consciousness that made his life a hell.

It was night when he entered the hall. No one was stirring. He walked to the dining-room door and looked in. It was deserted. Where was everybody? Ah! the library!

Roland bounded across the passage to the library-door; burst in, expecting to surprise his mother; with a joyous exclamation, used to disguise his gloom, rushed towards a lady, sitting by the grate with her back towards the door; not doubting that it was his mother, clasped his hands over her eyes; bent down and kissed the fair forehead.

The lady struggled to disengage herself; then screamed out her affright in clamorous cries.

Roland released her. Instead of a stately matron with a face beaming with affec-

tionate welcome turning to clasp him in her arms, a beautiful girl, with a face suffused with brilliant blushes, shrank abashed to the opposite side of the fireplace and then would have darted from the room to hide her confusion.

Roland was thunderstruck!

"Stay!" he cried—seeing her on the point of leaving the room—in a disconcerted tone, and with a look in which meek penitence and humorous astonishment were mingled. "Excuse me, I pray you! Having been absent from home several weeks, I had not anticipated this pleasure. I mistook you for my mother, whom I had thought to find here. I will retire and seek her. Pray ex— WHY IT'S DOLORES! How delighted I am to meet you!"

Roland dashed forward and seized the little hand which was shyly extended. And then, making her sit down and sitting beside her, he plied her with questions, not giving her a chance to say a word in reply.

The screams Dolores had given reverberated through the house; and, directly, the whole family were thronging into the library.

"It's only I!" cried Roland. "This young lady frightened me, and I screamed.—Do QUIT BLUSHING, DOLORES!"

Explanations, Welcomes, and Conversation followed.

The Vernons and Leighs who looked down from the canvass upon the youngest scion of their houses, that night, gazed upon two scenes of unusual strangeness. They saw him meet one, in whose ears he had whispered his tale of love, and by whom he had been rejected, with smiles and flatteries, while she tremblingly "hung, as the bee, on the honey of his tongue." And, when she had retired, they saw his eye flash with a deadly purpose and a weapon drawn and a—But, of this, in another place. Let us go back to Alice Reeves!

"Alice! Alice! You *must* struggle with this despondency; you must control yourself, my daughter. Where is your Pride?"

Mrs. Adams spoke tenderly, but there was something of a rebuke in her tone and words. When she bent over and kissed her daughter there was nothing but maternal sympathy in the fond gesture. Nothing!

Alice was in a torrent of grief, as her head reposed in that lap in which it had so often lain in childhood; she was unbosoming her distress, and seeking the counsel and condolence which only a mother's love can supply.

"But to have been so outrageously duped!" sobbed Alice, in answer to her mother's appeal. "Oh! oh! oh! My heart will break, mother; it will break! To think that I should have listened to Paul! to think that I should have distrusted Roland!—He, who was always so kind! so true! To think that I should have believed him to be capable of insincerity! to think that I doubted him. Oh! oh!"

"Daughter, be calmer, be braver!" expostulated Mrs. Adams. "Buoy yourself up, my child! Perhaps it may not be too late, even now, to explain to Mr. Vernon."

"O yes, it is; yes, it is too late now, mother! After what I've done, I could never approach him. I know he must hate me. Don't you think he does mother?"

"Not if he really loved you, my dear! And, for my part, I can see no reason why you shouldn't tell him frankly of the deception that was practiced. If your injustice and reproaches stung him so keenly, he must have loved you!"

Mrs. Adams uttered the last words musingly, as though she were thinking aloud.

"Oh! do you believe that?" cried Alice; but then adding "Of course he loved me—WHY MOTHER HE TOLD ME SO!"

"Did he!" exclaimed Mrs. Adams, with a very faint, almost imperceptible, smile. "Then, if he told you so, I suppose he did love you!"

And, making this remark, Mrs. Adams smiled quietly again, at her daughter's innocence; and patted her head, and said, "Poor child!"

CHAPTER IX.

SCENE: The Parsonage. TIME: October, 1860. DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: A mother and her daughter.

Then Madam Oracle looked at her daughter's tear-stained face, and drew her nearer, and embraced her fondly. At length, she spoke; saying, after clearing her throat and looking very gravely for a minute.

"Etiquette ought not to be defied by young ladies: although *there are times* when that even may be disregarded!"

"What does mother mean?" thought Alice, watching the grave face that was beaming over her with tenderness depicted in every feature.

"So I shall write a note to Mr. Vernon," continued Mrs. Adams; "and see if I cannot adjust this lover's quarrel that you have so foolishly precipitated. That is, if you are right sure that he ever loved you, and that you still love him—are you?"

"Oh! sweet Mamma!" cried Alice, her face brightening and her tears all vanishing.

"Well! What do you think—did he?"

Alice's face was hidden in her mother's lap; but there was a faint gurgle in her throat; and, then, a rapturous, "Yes, I know he did; and does now, for that mother!"

And she cried again, for joy this time.

"Trust everything to me, and be a good cheerful girl. I'll write to-morrow. There now!—will you sleep soundly to-night?"

Exeunt omnes.

NOTE.—This very same night Belle Woodruff retired very happy; for Roland told her in the afternoon that the family at Rushbrook were highly delighted at the prospect of her becoming his bride.

Scene shifts, to your posts! Whir! Whir! Whir! ALL RIGHT!

TIME: The following afternoon. SCENE: The portico of the Parsonage. Enter Alice and Mrs. Adams.

"Yes, dear! Run along. Get your hat and shawl, and walk a little in the fresh air. You *need* exercise!"

"Suppose I should meet *him*?"

"All the better, dear! He'll give your cheeks their roses back. Naughty fellow! to have stolen my child's heart!"

Obediently her mother, Alice Reeves got ready and bounded into the street with a

lighter heart than she had carried for weeks and weeks. She walked rapidly; and, imperceptibly went in the direction of the Old Oak, at the roots of which Roland Vernon first declared his love.

Reaching this trysting-place of yore she reclined at the foot of the dear old tree. Thick coming memories hurried fast upon one another as she sat there; and, thrilling with passionate and precious recollections, she was quickly oblivious to all that surrounded her, and had even forgotten the great grief that had weighed on her soul so heavily of late that she was pale and wan from its inroads.

She lived again the short exquisitely blissful hours of the past; the image of her lover, called up, by her imagination, from the banishment to which she had striven to consign it, rose distinctly before her eyes; and the old tender looks beamed down upon her as they had used to do; his dearly remembered words of endearment—the gentle epithets, the pet names by which he had addressed her, made her ears tingle once more; and the wild throbbings of maddening love pulsated quickly again. Her meditations were sweet as she was wrapt in this delightful reverie.

"Alice! ALICE!"

Only that low murmured word, repeated in a louder tone, broke the quietude of the spell.

She heard it. She recognized the voice. She saw a familiar form standing above her. She knew whose glances were bent upon her face.

"Surely I am dreaming! It cannot be—it cannot be that he has come back!" she exclaimed rubbing her eyes and looking dazedly around.

But she was not dreaming! It *was* he!

"Yes!" Yes; it *is* Roland!"

With this joyous cry on her lips, Alice Reeves threw herself into the arms of Belle Woodruff's betrothed husband, and he caught her fainting form in his embrace.

"Alice! My own Alice!"

At length she spoke—spoke words of endearment.

"O Roland! Dear, dear Roland! You have come back to me at last! Oh! oh! How I *do* love you!"

"Yes, dearest! And I love you a thousand times better than ever!"

Roland forgot Belle; forgot that he was a gentleman, and was only a man; forgot the words he had spoken to another, and took no thought of the consequences of this short-lived bliss.

"And you received mother's note?" asked Alice, after a pause.

"No."

"Then you have seen her?"

"No."

Prouder than woman ever was before—proud because he came back without explanation, urged only by his own desire for her love, for so she thought he had come—she lucidly and rapidly detailed the story of Paul Adams' treachery, and told him that she knew this from his own lips, that she had overheard him boasting of it to his father.

A cloud of anger settled on Vernon's brow, as he listened; he clenched his teeth, and trembled with a mighty fury.

"Nay! He is unworthy of resentment," said Alice, when she noticed the scowl of wrath that instantly converted him into a demon. "You must not think of punishing him as he deserves. For mother's sake, promise me, Roland! Remember he is her husband's son!"

Vernon was silent!

Alice pressed her point,

"Roland, if you love me, promise!"

He ground his teeth, and answered,

"The reptile! For the present he may escape; but the time will come when I will crush him under my foot."

CHAPTER X.

A STOUTER, and yet a kinder heart, never beat in human bosom than that of Roland Vernon. No one could endure more suffering, but no one more disliked to occasion it in others. He would have turned from his path to avoid treading on a spider; he would have given his last morsel of bread to the veriest miscreant and starved himself rather than have witnessed his distress; he would have sacrificed his own ease and

encountered discomfort to accommodate a friend; and he would have chosen the tortures of the rack, and borne them with fortitude, in preference to willfully occasioning grief to a fellow-creature.

It is not difficult to understand how a person of this character would naturally shrink from the performance of such a duty as now devolved upon him; not difficult to understand that he could not tell Belle Woodruff of the change in his feelings which, just at the moment of her completed happiness, occurred to destroy the hope of a fulfillment of her bright anticipations.

No! Roland Vernon was unable to utter the words which he ought to have uttered. He could not inform his betrothed wife that another's smiles, another's love was dearer to him than her smiles and love. It was the kind of nerve that he did not possess—the nerve to occasion pain.

What could he say to her? What explanation could he make? What consolation, what amends could he offer?

Yet, he could not undeceive Alice. He neglected, in the whirl of excitement that followed her sobbing reiteration of love, to inform her of the engagement with Belle and that the time for his marriage with her was appointed; and having neglected this then, and permitted her to hope that the past was to be forgotten in the future, there was no chance for him, having encouraged her expectations, to make a subsequent confession and throw himself upon her generosity. This would have crushed her heart, and cost him irreparable misery.

Entangled in this dilemma he knew not how to extricate himself without compromising his reputation and inflicting suffering. He saw no escape except in waiting.

But to wait he must keep silence; to be silent, for a day, for an hour, was to resort to dishonor and duplicity.

His very strength was weakness; his greatest virtue became a vice.

Then hesitating he delayed any action; delaying he became more deeply entangled; and, at last, despairing of preserving his honor, he submitted to his fate.

But he was haunted by a feeling of self-contempt. He sought to rid himself of this tormentor; he withdrew himself from so-

ciety ; he travelled ; he came back home piloried with remorse.

Still, all the while, he was blameless, and was only the victim of circumstances. Striving to avoid duplicity, he practiced deception ; seeking to do right, he stumbled upon wrong.

It was this consciousness of innocence of all intention to do wrong, and of no crime save weakness, however, that made the poignancy of his regret so deplorably intolerable.

Under the stress of this unendurable self-reproach his mind became diseased ; and the depression and despondency, broken only by a fitful flash of cheerfulness in a moment of oblivion, that weighed upon his heart and brain, and foreboded evil.

During his absence from Rushbrook he considered all the attendant circumstances of his unfortunate entanglement in this double engagement, and tried to foresee its consequences. His mind was in no condition to make nice discriminations and the result of his deliberations was a resolution to do the most foolish thing that a disordered imagination could suggest.

The grave had no terrors for his soul ; a life without honor, a consciousness of honor and a reputation for dishonor, had no charm ; he would cut the Gordian knot by self-immolation. But to die the death of a suicide in a strange place was not a part of his purpose ; and, once having determined upon his course, he hastened back to Rushbrook, to execute his desperate design in his father's house, where the prying and scandal-loving world could not penetrate to gloat over the horrible details.

"The native hue of resolution" did not sickly "o'er with the pale cast of thought" when he reached home ; but came nearer taking the "name of action."

As the reader knows, Roland found Dolores Vaughn in the library at Rushbrook upon his arrival, and that he sat late conversing with her and the members of the home circle.

One after another all went off to bed, save Roland only. When he heard the last chamber-door slam, and was convinced that he alone of all the household watched, awake, he turned the key in the library door ; took the lamp from its place on the

mantle ; opened his desk in the rear of the room, and, taking paper, pen and ink, wrote three letters.

One was to Belle Woodruff, in which he told her the story of his engagement to Alice Reeves, their rupture, and their subsequent meeting and reconciliation. In regard to this he said that he strayed without any design to the Old Oak, found Alice there, her cheeks wan, her form emaciated, her eyes weak with traces of weeping, and, oh ! so changed, that he could not forbear to pity her, relent his anger, and seek a renewal of friendship ; that he had intended no more when he approached her ; but that, when, upon the utterance of her name by him, she rushed to throw herself upon his neck with words of tenderness on her tongue, he could not restrain the impulse to clasp her to his bosom ; and, furthermore, that having heard the cause of her resentment which had originally occasioned the break between himself and her—the treachery of her step brother—the old warmth came bounding back again, and he found that he loved Alice more fondly than ever. Having said this in extenuation, he briefly told her that he was impelled to the step which he was about to take by a feeling of inability to encounter her after having been so recreant to his duty to her.

Another was to Alice, and contained a similar explanation ; but this one concluded by a wild protestation of love.

A third was written to Colonel Vernon, in which a full and comprehensive statement of the considerations inducing his rash act was given.

The letters written, folded, enveloped, and addressed, Roland drew forth a Derringer pistol, and deliberately loaded it.

Rising from his seat he took the lamp and placed it again on the mantelpiece, under the lamp he put the three letters ; and then he walked to the door and unlocked it.

Now every preparation was completed ; nothing was left to be done except to place the muzzle between his fingers, his hand covering and feeling the pulsations of his heart, and the pulling of the trigger.

He was wonderfully calm.

Ah ! 'twas a pity for so much youthful promise and talent, virtue and gentleness,

to be driven to this self-sought, self-inflicted death. Yet there was no sign of relenting as he crossed the floor to the fireplace, to make a last inspection, to take a last thought, whether all was right, whether anything had been neglected.

A blaze flickered in the grate, and the red hot coals cast a curious glamour on the opposite wall. Roland turned to look at the bright reflection, and his eye rested on the face of James Leigh, peering, with a luminous glitter in his eyes, peering down upon his grandson from the gilt-framed canvass.

Roland trembled! HE HESITATED! HE REMEMBERED THE OATH!

In the presence of his forefathers the young man stood irresolute! He recollected the promise to James Leigh never to bring reproach on the name or on the blood that he inherited. And self-murder was considered by the world to be dishonorable!

But was it so great a dishonor as falsehood, treachery; and to a woman?

There hung the portrait of the oldest Louis Vernon, who preferred death by his own hand on the field of Preston Pans to living a captive of his enemies—and his memory was revered! Surely to live in disgrace was far worse than the most intolerable captivity! Such were Vernon's thoughts as he stood there considering; and he made a movement as if to end the suspense of Doubt.

BUT THE OATH! It left no choice!

James Leigh had cut out work for Roland Vernon—the boy was to win a fame as honorable as any of his line; and the work was still unfinished, the Oath unfulfilled.

Reason resumed her throne; Roland Vernon submitted to his Destiny.

CHAPTER XI.

NATURE had been prodigal of her gifts to Roland Vernon; but then among his other faculties he did not possess that flexibility of countenance which easily counterfeits

passion. Indeed, he was a very poor actor, and had little capacity for dissimulation.

Up to this time he had no occasion for the exercise of such a power; but now he was sadly in need of some talent of this description, for, all unpracticed as he was, he met with very indifferent success in the effort to conceal the change of his sentiments from Belle Woodruff.

With quick perception, and a rare womanly tact, she immediately discovered, from his undisguised desire to produce a different impression, that something had gone wrong with Roland; and, suspecting this, she commenced instantly to fathom the secret which was being hidden from her with such awkward but dogged persistence.

She forbore all inquiry; but waited patiently with an unshaken confidence that there would be an ultimate disclosure.

Roland continued his visits to The Meadows at regular intervals, and preserved an outward show of affection for his betrothed; but he did this at the sacrifice of self-esteem and with a heavy soul.

Belle persisted in watching him closely; but all her schemes to entrap him into a confession of some hidden trouble were baffled.

"Then there must be some very vexatious thing at the bottom of all this mystery!"

She thought this, and her perplexity became more intense. Perplexity was succeeded by premonitions, and tremblings, and fears. She was fretted, and resolved all the more determinedly that her suspense should be brought to an end.

Meanwhile Roland's courtship was tender enough to be in keeping with the requirements of social usage; but no more. He acted as became a gentleman who had determined to marry a lady no longer loved.

Belle's quickness of apprehension enabled her to perceive everything, and this fact in the midst of many others.

So things went until February, and then Belle's impatience impelled her to action.

Roland was paying one of his stated visits, and sat with her in the drawing-room at The Meadows. Both were looking vacantly into the bed of burning coals which threw a red glow from the grate. Roland

was in a fit of abstraction ; Belle's wits were wool-gathering. For a long time neither had disturbed the other's thoughts with an observation.

Rousing, at length, from the revery in which she had been indulging, the young lady turned her eyes towards her companion, and, with a quick penetrating look, boldly inquired,

"So you repent those fair words—you no longer love me?"

Roland was startled from his meditations, and grew confused and hesitated.

She saw that her *coup* had placed his secret at her mercy.

"How absurd an idea!" he replied, after rallying from his surprise.

"Now, Mr. Vernon," was the well-timed retort; "there is no need of protestations. Off with the mask. Tell me frankly that you have repented!"

"Repented!" he exclaimed, with poorly acted astonishment.

"Away with disguises!" she continued. "Make me your *confidante*. Let me aid you to remove all the obstructions to your happiness. This state of things cannot, and shall not, continue! There is something on your mind—some secret; and I must share it!"

Brought squarely up to this point, forced to make a specific denial, or to acknowledge the truth of her suspicions; and no loophole for escape left, Vernon met her frankly.

"Yes, you are right. I have a secret; but *you* cannot share it!"

"Then, sir, I must believe that secret to be one that affects me directly, one that affects our relations as affianced man and wife. Is it not so?"

Roland was silent.

"You do not reply! Then I am not mistaken. I must ask, therefore, to be released from my pledges; and I insist upon receiving the release!"

"You are excited, Belle! Does it cost you nothing to make such a demand?"

"Not if you persist in your refusal to disclose your secret!"

"Then you can forego my loveso easily?"

"Yes."

"You have no charge to make against me for unfaithfulness?"

"None; except that you refuse me your confidence."

"You still demand a release?"

"Yes!"

The dialogue proceeded calmly thus far; question and answer following in quick succession; Roland and Belle looking each other firmly in the eyes.

"THEN I RELEASE YOU!"

A deep pause. Then Vernon rose to go and confronted Belle.

"We are to be friends still?" she asked, as he took her hand which she extended when he said "Good night."

"Forever! Perhaps, *confidantes* one of these days."

The extrication came thus unexpectedly; but it was none the less welcome on that score.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. VAUGHN wrote to his old school friend, Charles Vernon, stating the condition of affairs in the North, and asking about C—town as a place of refuge for his family till the fury of popular passion subsided in the country.

When Colonel Vernon received this letter he immediately replied and warmly invited Mrs. and Miss Vaughn to make his house their home, promising to take good care of them until they could return to B— with safety, or until proper provision could be made for their permanent comfort.

This invitation was so cordially extended, together with a pressing appeal to Mr. Vaughn not to endanger his life by remaining where it would be in imminent jeopardy and to come South with his family, that he could not but feel under obligation to accept for Dolores and her mother the generously offered hospitality of his Carolina friends.

And so it was that Roland Vernon found Dolores domesticated at Rushbrook upon his return from his protracted tour.

Dolores had not utterly relinquished her designs upon Vernon's heart when she came South; but a few weeks' residence at

Rushbrook convinced her that he had almost forgotten that he ever professed to love her, and that she must abandon all expectation of regaining her mastery over his affections.

Roland treated her with a familiarity that forbade all hope of attracting him to her side as a suitor. He was affectionate and kind, but his affection was the unembarrassed affection of a brother, rather than the shrinking devotion or the passionate fervor of a lover.

Love is a flower that, with a few sporadic exceptions, dies in the shade; and Dolores, when she appreciated the extent of the change in Roland's sentiments, soon learned to subdue the tenderness which gushed out afresh at her meetings with her *ci-devant* admirer and slave.

After spending a couple of months very pleasantly at Rushbrook, when it became apparent that war was inevitable, the Vaughns rented a dwelling in C—town, and were soon settled in their new home.

It was natural that a girl of such rare attractions as Dolores possessed should win her way in a society which she was eminently fitted to adorn, and that she should secure a train of devoted admirers among the members of the other sex. And such was the case.

Paul Adams was constant in his attentions and very devoted. If his soul was capable of entertaining such an exalted sentiment, he loved her very fondly, and pressed his siege against the citadel of her heart with stubborn vigor and earnest enthusiasm.

Dolores was dazzled by the bright intellect of the man; and, flattered by the eloquent praises which he knew so well how to bestow, she soon capitulated and thought herself compensated for the loss of Roland Vernon.

Roland watched the progress of this courtship; and, at the proper time, cautioned Dolores that Adams was unworthy of her regard; but she gave him a bitter retort and hushed his friendly admonitions.

And so she was ruined. Utterly!

* * * * *

When Jock Wright ascertained that Roland Vernon's engagement with Belle Woodruff was broken off, he determined to risk another venture; and forthwith commenced a renewal of his rejected suit—this time with a fairer prospect of reward for long-enduring love.

So, without further obstruction the current of true love thenceforth ran smooth. Until Spring nothing occurred to mar the general joy of our heroines and their lovers. But, when April was near its close, there came

"Sudden partings such as press
The life out of young hearts; and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated."

Paul Adams and Dolores were married early in the month; later, by two or three weeks, Roland Vernon and Alice knelt together at the altar; while the festivities which followed these weddings got Jock Wright to meditating about marriage rings, and brought dreams of orange-blossom wreaths to the pillow of the heiress of The Meadows.

It would be well if the words—AND ALL WERE HAPPY!—might be written here, the closing sentence of this narrative.

But, alas! that which has been chronicled, is but the introduction to the more tragic scenes, which a regard for truth impels the editor to transcribe.

Even while the air was filled with sounds of pealing, rejoicing marriage-bells; even while the benedictions of the minister were still fresh tingling in the ears of happy brides; even while Jock Wright mused hopefully and Belle Woodruff's mind was seething with delicious reveries, loud salvos of artillery, mingled with exultant cheers bursting from thousands of hoarse throats in a distant Southern city, hailed the arrival of an Era, which was to bring gloom, adversity, and subjugation to a brave people.

Honeymoons were disturbed by the booming of cannon at Sumpter; and Patriotism conquered Love; and Husbands, leaving weeping Wives, went forth to the Battles of Civil War.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE War commenced almost simultaneously at Charleston and Baltimore. The first round was fought; the combatants paused a moment to breathe before plunging into the deepened struggle.

It was May, 1861. A calm preceded the storm, a brief season of quiet was to be followed by a fearful campaign. The month was active with preparations. Troops were being recruited and organized into companies and battalions, brigades and divisions.

Camp Winslow was situated on the W—— Railroad, and was commanded by Colonel Robert Ashe. Gentleman, Politician, Secessionist, Orator, Soldier.

The passing trains carrying soldiers to Virginia could be seen from the hillside on which Camp Winslow was located. The encampment was in a large oak grove, that swept up a gradual elevation from the railroad. The marquee of Colonel Ashe was in the centre of the rear line that rested just upon the brow of the eminence, and had two entrances, one opening from the front and looking out upon the rows of company tents that lay in advance, the other from the rear and affording a view of the village of H——, the depot, and the track of the railroad.

Five or six companies were quartered in the straggling tents in the foreground. On a bench in front of the Colonel's marquee, the officers of these commands were conversing together, speculating upon the probabilities of the contest being ended before they could get to Virginia.

Colonel Ashe was addressing himself on

that morning of the 16th of May to a young man who flushed with pride at being called Adjutant.

As their conversation touches upon a subject of interest to the reader, we will draw near and listen.

"You do not really doubt that young Vernon will enter the service, Adjutant?" says Colonel Ashe.

"I certainly do, Colonel."

"And pray tell me why—I had thought better of the young man than to believe that he would prove recreant at such a time as this, when every man in Carolina ought to be in the field."

"There are several reasons," said the Adjutant after a slight hesitation.

"Well, what are they? When I met Vernon I was highly pleased with his boldness, talent, and sentiments—still I have only met him once."

"In the first place," answered Adjutant Paul Adams, "Col. Vernon has been elected to the Convention which meets in Raleigh on the 20th inst. He will make his mark in that body, will be in a position to command favors of Gov. Ellis, will provide good berths for himself and his son, and both will be patriotic at home. Col. Vernon has been recommended for Congressman by two or three of the newspapers."

"Is that your only reason?"

"Why, yes, Colonel!"

"Then, sir, your opinion is a mere surmise. There is no better blood—fighting blood!—in North Carolina than runs in Roland Vernon's veins. He comes of a race of soldiers!"

"Oh! I was not aware that he was a

particular friend, Colonel—I beg pardon!”

“He is not; but I know the stock. Roland Vernon will be in this fight, will die in it, or will cut his way to immortal honor.”

“You may be right, sir; but I consider myself a pretty good judge of human nature!”

“You do? Then being a judge of human nature, knowing Vernon thoroughly, you say he will play the sneak! By God, sir, I’d quicker suspect you!”

Paul Adams made no response; and Col. Ashe proceeded:

“Captain Richardson thinks he will succeed in raising the company; Jack Morrisson swears he will be in the field in ten days—you only seem to doubt his patriotism and courage. I shall write to him immediately and ask him to join my regiment. Perhaps an invitation from me will fix—”

“There’s another arrival of troops!” interrupted Adams, pointing to the crowded box cars of a long train just sweeping in sight.

The air was rent by a lusty cheer from the camp, which was responded to from the train. Then everybody hastened towards the depot.

Col. Ashe was met by an orderly with despatches, and turned back to attend to them.

“Ah! Vernon ordered to report to me! Perhaps his company is on that train—I’ll step down and see!” he exclaimed when he finished the perusal of the Adjutant-General’s communication.

He met Adams in the door, and said:

“Glad you’ve come! I wanted you. Tell Richardson to get ready to leave this for Raleigh at half-past one—his company is taken from me and put into the First Regiment. And, I say, Vernon has raised his company and will report to me.”

“Yes, sir. He is here. Oh, Colonel, I hope you’ll not mention what I said to you. I spoke in confidence.”

“Certainly not!”

“Here comes Captain Vernon now—looking for you, no doubt!”

“Indeed!” And turning Col. Ashe ad-

vanced to meet the young officer, cordially exclaiming, as he grasped his hand,

“Very glad to see you, sir—very!”

“Thank you, Colonel! I feared you would not remember me. How have you been since our meeting on the Hudson?”

“Quite well! And your father, how is he?”

Captain Vernon answered this and the torrent of questions that poured out upon him; and, at length, was left to recline under the shade of the Colonel’s shelter, while that officer wrote some letters which were to be sent off at one o’clock.

A few minutes of solitude and Vernon had a visitor—Corporal John Morrisson of Captain Richardson’s company.

“Why, Roland! I’m proud to shake your hand, my boy—proud as a mare of her first colt!”

“Delighted to see you, Mr. Morrisson. I hope you are pleased with the service?”

“Corporal, not Mister, if you please. That’s my title now!”

“Ah! beg pardon! But you don’t answer my inquiry.”

“Well Roland, I can’t say that I’m in ecstasies over my soldiering experiences—especially since I’ve found the real meaning of Camp of Instruction. I’d rather be back in C—town!”

“What’s the matter, CORPORAL? In what particular have you been deceived?”

“Not exactly deceived, Roland—but enlightened! I didn’t know any more about a Camp of Instruction when I left home than a cross-cut saw knows of metaphysics—but I’m posted now!”

And what has your experience taught you, Corporal?”

Vernon noticed the quizzical expression of Morrisson’s face, and expected one of his extravagances.

“Why it’s taught me just this—that a Camp of Instruction is a place where a large body of men, all having natural feelings and affections and beset with natural fears, are cooped within a guard line, kept out of their usual whisky supplies, trotted in the broiling sun, drilled in the rain, double quicked all the time by lazy Lieutenants who sit still and give their orders from the centre of the parade ground, Hep!

hep! hep! until the whole of the batch are educated not to care a continental damn whether they live or die, survive or perish—a place from which men are sent to battle fields to be killed like sheep. But even this is a release from suffering. A Camp of Instruction's a barbarous place, Roland!"

So saying, Corporal Morrisson departed to attend roll call.

CHAPTER II.

THE Company of Captain Richardson, of which Paul Adams was a Lieutenant, left at half past one o'clock to join the regiment of Col. Hill, which was in process of organization at Raleigh. Paul, although he desired to continue in his position of Adjutant to Colonel Ashe, was compelled to leave Camp Winslow with his company; and, with it, after joining the Regiment, went to Virginia, upon its reception of an order to proceed to Yorktown, and reported to Colonel Magruder.

Meanwhile Colonel Ashe received his full quota of companies and commenced preparing for active service. Dr. Effingham of C—town was induced to accept the office of Surgeon, and Jock Wright, who was a kinsman of Colonel Ashe, was tendered the permanent Adjutancy.

Vernon studied earnestly in the interval between his arrival at Camp Winslow and the departure of the F—th Regiment for the scene of action, and soon acquired familiarity with Jomini, Hardee, and the Army Regulations, giving decided indications of a promising military career.

Vernon's company was officered by men of his own selection, its members having agreed to ratify all the nominations of the Captain in return for his liberality in uniforming, and equipping it at his own expense. Consequently it was well drilled, well disciplined, and prepared for campaigning.

While the F—th Regiment remained at Camp Winslow drilling and getting ready for active service, the First Regiment

fought the battle of Bethel, and gave an example of valor to the rest of the Southern troops, electrifying the whole country with the brilliant achievements of its prowess.

Colonel Ashe and Vernon were disheartened upon the reception of the news of this victory, as it was in their opinions likely to terminate the war and prevent them from a participation in its danger and glory.

In a few days, however, this regret was banished. About the 15th of July, the F—th Regiment received orders to join General Beauregard, who was then stationed near Fairfax Court House with a small but growing army; and with happy hearts, panting to be among the foremost in the fight, they passed through Richmond, and reached Manassas Junction on the afternoon of Friday, July 19th, the day after Longstreet, supporting the Washington Artillery, repulsed the first onward movement of McDowell.

When the F—th Regiment got to the Bull Run, General Beauregard was anticipating an attack, and had his force disposed for battle. Ewell's right rested at Union Mills, Longstreet's right joined his left, and extended towards Stonebridge, covering Mitchell's and Blackburn's fords, while Cocke and Evans held the left with other troops from the Shenandoah sent down by Johnston. Bonham was in advance between Union Mills and Centreville, ready to fall back on Ewell's right, or to press forward in assault as the wisdom of the great commander might determine to be best.

Johnston was in consultation with Beauregard all night long; and it was nearly dawn when they received reliable intelligence of the movements of the Federal Captain, who was massing his troops on the turnpike that leads from Centreville to Warrenton across the Stonebridge, with the evident purpose of turning Beauregard's left, having been convinced of the impregnability of the centre and of the impossibility of making a successful assault on the right.

In a moment after the reception of this information, Beauregard suggested, and Johnston acquiesced in a plan of defence, which was at once simple and feasible. As

soon as McDowell commenced the attack on the left, Ewell, Bonham and Longstreet were to be pushed forward to attack in left and rear at Centreville, and to cut the Federal army to pieces. These brigade commanders were cautioned to be ready for this movement, and then all waited in anxious silence for the break of day when the battle would assuredly begin.

The F——th Regiment was assigned to Genl. Longstreet's brigade, immediately after its arrival at Manassas, and with the other troops of that command prepared for the imminent fight.

Heintzelman and Hunter, of the Federal army, meanwhile, marched for Sudley Ford, crossed the run, and, with a column of many thousand men, crept slowly into position in Evans' rear.

The attack commenced by a demonstration in front of Evans, at Stonebridge; and while that brave old hero stood panting for the pounce upon him which he fully expected, and listened unsuspectingly to the thundering artillery immediately before his lines, the force from Sudley was heralded by a cavalryman retreating before its approach.

This was about eight or nine o'clock. Genl. Evans was surprised, but could not be thrown off his guard, and without hesitating changed front, hurried forward to a position west of the Stone House on the Brentsville-Sudley road, where he encountered the lines of Hunter in a sharp and furious wrestle.

The battle raged furiously now. For eight miles the heights on the north bank of Bull Run were crowned with batteries; and from these a harmless but boisterous fire was poured.

The time for the execution of Beauregard's plan now came. Orderlies were dispatched—it being between eight and nine o'clock—to Longstreet, Bonham and Ewell, with directions for them to be in waiting for the signal of assault.

Longstreet was commanded to throw his brigade across Bull Run, at Mitchell's Ford, to confront Sprague's Rhode Island Battery, to charge and capture this, and turn it upon the rear of McDowell's main force. This was to be done as soon as the guns of Bonham and Ewell opened. Those brigades

were to receive an order of attack directly from Genl. Beauregard. And for this the whole right waited—only Longstreet moved forward into attacking position.

When he received Genl. Beauregard's instructions, Genl. Longstreet rode up to Col. Ashe, of the F——th Regiment, and requested him to detail his most reliable officer for hazardous duty.

"Captain Vernon!" cried Col. Ashe. "Captain Vernon report immediately to Genl. Longstreet."

Obedying, Captain Vernon was directed to select a body-guard from his company, and with them to cross the ford, climb the hill in front, reconnoitre the enemy's position, ascertain the best point of attack, and choose the best route to the battery in front.

While Roland was making this reconnaissance, Longstreet prepared his men to move forward, ever and anon looking towards the spot where the young officer had disappeared.

Fifteen minutes—twenty minutes—twenty-five minutes glided by, and still Vernon did not return. Thirty minutes—

"——There he comes!" exclaimed an aide.

"Well, Captain?" was the quick interrogatory of the General.

"All right, sir!" was the response. "Just behind the hill there is a break in the plateau; then a valley guarded by another hill; a hundred yards further, on a higher eminence, the battery is located. From the second hill you can charge gloriously. To get to it, with least exposure, the ravine, which leads from the outer edge of the woods that overlook our present position to within fifty yards of its base, must be followed. With the exception of that interval, between ravine and hill, we will have cover; but for fifty yards we will catch a scorching fire. There is no better approach!"

"You must be our guide! Move forward by the right flank, Colonel, and follow Captain Vernon."

The ford was crossed, the hill was ascended, the ravine was followed, and then the head of the brigade pushed out into the fifty yards of clear ground that separated the troops from security.

As the line debouched the enemy opened

a fearful enfilade fire, and rendered it absolutely necessary to press on rapidly, or to retire. Else slaughter was certain.

Yonder was protection, and a natural stronghold in which to form the attacking line. The cover of the little hill must be gained.

Col. Ashe's regiment dashed ahead, guided by Vernon, but the Federal artillerists hurled grape into its ranks, and cut them down, volley after volley. The wounded wailed piteously; the dying fell heavily to the ground and groaned in agony.

The guide pressed on undauntedly, and behind him followed the serpentine files.

Crash! crash! crash! The regiment is torn with cannister. It staggers. It halts. A few men break—the rest are thrown into confusion. They are panic-stricken!

Vernon looked back at this moment and saw the disgraceful disorder. Col. Ashe was endeavoring to rally his command and Genl. Longstreet was assisting.

Out leapt the sword that had gleamed so brightly at Preston Pans—the sword of Louis Vernon—the sword handed down from generation to generation. High leapt the warrior heart of the Vernon and the Leigh. Loud rang the voice of the brave descendant of a brave race—rang a clear piercing note of inspiration and encouragement.

"BACK TO YOUR PLACES, MEN! PRESS FORWARD! TO ADVANCE IS SECURITY, TO RETREAT IS RUIN! FORWARD!"

And so Roland steadied the quivering ranks; so he rallied the flying; so made the faltering brave.

Then, as before, they moved calmly onward, and, filling up the gaps that death had made in their files, closed up to their leader, found the sought-for safety behind the brow of the gained hill.

The hilt of Vernon's sword remained in his grasp, but the blade of the Damascus had been cut in twain by a shot.

"Right valiantly done, Captain! Ah! your sword gone? You shall have mine!"

Saying this, Genl. Longstreet turned to an orderly, and called for another sabre, handing the youthful warrior the magnificent blade which he had been wearing.

"Wear this! and I'll tell the world how you won it!"

Secure in this position, Longstreet waited, fretting and impatient, for the signal guns of Ewell and Bonham—waited in vain, until afternoon, when he received information of the unfortunate miscarriage of the order for attack which Beauregard forwarded, and, with this intelligence, instructions to retire.

But how had the battle gone on the left?

While Evans grappled with Hunter, the force of Genl. Keys crossed at the Red House Ford, and, with the large column at Stonebridge, closed in upon him. Still the brave South Carolinian, followed with his eight hundred men and two guns, struggled on desperately with the thirty thousand infantry concentrating their attack upon his line; and, although driven back, at last, he continued to riddle them with his well directed fire.

At the sublime juncture, Bee and Bartow, with four thousand fresh troops, descended rapidly to reinforce the fragment of the noble brigade of Evans, now literally cut to pieces.

Jackson, Hampton, Cocke and others, became engaged almost simultaneously, and then the fierce conflict waxed terribly grand in its fury.

Then Johnston and Beauregard, wooed by the sublimity of the storm, came tearing at a headlong gallop right into the heart of the battle. They took the colors of the regiments and in the dim light of the blazing muskets they could be seen through the smoke of the hotly contested field leading their men to meet shock with shock—their lives thrown in to turn the scale of victory!

Advantages were won: others were lost.

The crisis of the conflict was reached—a single company's strength would have turned the result either way.

The two commanders—each with a battle flag in his grasp—Beauregard and Johnston were in the midst of the tumultuous roar of the engagement's vortex; but at the same moment they discovered their peril and the only remedy—the only hope. They acted energetically.

Each led a brigade to the attack; each hurled his followers fiercely against the lines of the foe; each by dint of glorious example made his little cohort cut its way

through the Federal centre. And their army was saved; their laurels—immortal laurels—won!

McDowell's forces were quickly disordered, and soon went flying from the field with the yelling Confederates at their heels. Again they were re-formed, and marshalled in a semi-circle along the ridge in rear of the Stone House.

But brave old Jubal Early fell savagely upon the right, while Kirby Smith, just arrived upon the scene, hurled his entire force upon them in front, and drove them, routed, back upon Centreville.

Then came the Panic! This rushing mass of human beings, scattering in every direction, with shell crashing, and tearing them, and their own cavalry trampling upon them, their own artillery and wagons crushing them as they fell; throwing away guns, equipments, accoutrements, everything, they ran for life, madly, wildly, until they reached the shelter of their fortifications around Alexandria and Washington.

While this disgraceful flight was being enacted by the baffled subjugators, Captain Vernon, uniting with his fellows of the successful army, heartily shouted the glad refrain of, VICTORY! as it came leaping from tongue to tongue, and was passed with jubilant cheers from right to left of the triumphant lines.

CHAPTER III.

THE day after the battle Vernon wrote to Alice and informed her of his safety; but it was at least ten days after the news of the victory reached C—town before this messenger of comfort reached the agonized wife.

She was living in a cottage in the town which she inherited from her father, and her mother Mrs. Adams was with her to keep her company during the absence of Roland.

The Reverend Mr. Adams died early in June, and the barrier to a good feeling between Alice's mother and husband was removed.

They were together in this cottage—mother and daughter—when the news of the great carnage at Bull Run and Manassas came. Alice was immediately plunged into a stupor of grief and despair, in which condition she remained until the reception of her husband's letter, assuring her of his health and miraculous escape from the perils through which he had passed. Then the wife was made very happy and tears were instantly converted into smiles, sorrowing and apprehension into joy and gratitude.

It will be remembered that Captain Vernon recruited his company at his own individual cost. Now that he had entered the service, he concluded to see what he could do towards ameliorating the condition of the wives, children, and other dependents of these men who were induced to serve their country through his persuasions. In order to provide for their wants, and to render them comfortable, he determined to devote the larger part of his income to the purchase of supplies and other necessary things to assure them a comfortable subsistence during the absence of their natural guardians and protectors. From various sources Vernon could command an income of about twenty-five thousand dollars, four-fifths of which he could readily spare to further this benevolent end.

Thinking wisely that his wife would bear the separation, which his service in the army rendered necessary, with a more patient resignation, if she had some absorbing and responsible duty devolving upon her for her performance; and, relying upon her discretion and unselfish patriotism, he committed to her the labor of superintending the distribution of the stores which he provided for the dependents on his bounty.

This was a work of no small importance, and required a very considerable energy and business capacity. But Vernon's confidence in his wife's ability to discharge the duty satisfactorily was not misplaced. She divided the families entitled to share in this distribution into six classes, each of which had a particular day of the week set apart for its applications for relief.

The yard of the little cottage, in which Alice and Mrs. Adams resided, swarmed

every forenoon with applicants for orders on Mr. Peterson, the storekeeper employed by Vernon to issue the supplies for which his wife gave requisitions.

Vernon's bounty was not confined to those who had a show of claim upon him by reason of connection with members of his company; but many others, needy and suffering, were often saved from distress by his generosity. And this fact, while it occasioned Alice a greater inconvenience, and taxed, to their utmost tension, her powers of endurance and grace of patience, served to enliven the monotony of her life with occasional phases of humor, and to give her a very careful instruction in the great science of human nature.

A motley mixture was that crowd of vulgar and debased humanity that came thronging around this pure, refined, and noble Christian woman every day, looking up to her for the satisfaction of their small but pressing wants.

What lack of sympathy for a common poverty they displayed! What petty groveling jealousy, what rancorous hatred they nursed in their envious breasts!

How they maligned each other to win, as they hoped, the especial favor of their benefactress! How they lied and cheated! How they quarrelled and fought and cursed among themselves! And then how they attempted to brow-beat the charitable woman who turned a deaf ear to the slanders of their companions in misery!

It is almost impossible to conceive an adequate idea of the revolting scenes of depravity and ingratitude, of diurnal recurrence, which were constantly presented to Alice's contemplation.

She was disgusted, but repressed the temptation to abandon the philanthropic work which she had undertaken. She remembered that it was a holy labor, one that she was qualified to perform; and, besides, it was one of the sweetly humane precepts of her philosophy, that,

CHARITY SHOULD BE BLIND TO EVERYTHING SAVE WANT!

So Alice continued her labors of charity and patriotism, whiling away the period of gloom that elapsed between her husband's parting kiss and the fond embrace of his return. So she filled up many hours of

weariness and longing between the first of May and the middle of November.

Among others of her pensioners was a Mrs. Jacobs, the wife of a non-commissioned officer of Vernon's company. Mrs. Jacobs was a coarse looking woman, and of such voluble tongue that Alice always disliked to see her coming into the yard.

One morning in the latter part of October, however, this pest presented herself at the door of the sitting-room in which Alice sat writing a letter. She had an infant at her breast, which every now and then raised its head and uttered a feeble wail. With a courtesy to the mistress of the comfortable apartment in which she stood, Mrs. Jacobs advanced and in her extended hand held out a letter addressed in a familiar handwriting.

"Mr. Peterson asked me, as how I was a coming over here, to please to deliver this letter, as which he are of the opinion that it comed from the Captain," said Mrs. Jacobs with a flourish. "I do trust in God that it is; for I haint heard from Bill in a month, and I hope ef he's able he'll send a message by sich an opportunity. Blessed Lord! what's the matter?"

Alice's eye sparkled with pleasure; her heart bounded with delight; and there she was dancing for dear life, not paying the slightest attention to her guest.

Mrs. Jacobs, who, like all of her class, poor, simple souls! thought that the Captain could not write a letter to his wife without giving a full history of the condition of all the soldiers in his command, had been standing in expectation of hearing the news from her husband, looked blank with amazement when she saw Alice make a spring and commencing a wild dance of joy.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" she continued, seeing that the dance grew faster and more furious. "Is the Cap'en agwine to give Bill a furlough?"

The old ignoramus did not know what a furlough was; but she had an indistinct idea that it was something which brought people's husbands home from the army.

Alice did not smile at the woman's simplicity. She was too full of sweet thoughts, and only lavished a shower of kisses on the pages of the letter in reply.

"Good Gracious! I do believe Miss Vernons is agwine crazy. Can't you answer a civil question, ma'am?"

"No, no, Mrs. Jacobs! Not your husband, but *mine*, is to have a furlough."

Then seeing the tears of disappointment rising in the other's eyes, she added in a gentle and consoling tone,

"But don't you be distressed! I'll ask him to let Mr. Jacobs come when he goes back. I wonder how long Roland's furlough is?—for a year, I hope!"

"May God bless ye, honey! Will you ask him? Do you declare you will?"

And the poor old creature wept with delight; and then wiped her dirty tear-stained cheeks with a ragged handkerchief.

Roland wrote that his regiment was just going into winter quarters at Centreville, and that he would be home on a leave of absence in the course of a couple of weeks.

Mrs. Adams was informed by her daughter of the happiness to which she looked forward, and a message was sent out to Rushbrook to inform the family there of the intended visit. And there were sounds of preparation to receive the gallant soldier with fitting festivities.

The labor of attending to the wants of the soldiers' wives was temporarily transferred to Mrs. Adams; and Alice was left with little else to do than to entertain her husband upon his arrival.

CHAPTER IV.

On the 7th of November Captain Vernon reached home.

Who can describe such a meeting as his with Alice? Or the fondness of the welcome which he received?

Who can adequately portray the passionate joy with which he caught the happy wife in his strong arms, and the fervor of impetuous love, so prodigal of its burning kisses?

Pass over the day and night of his return! Be not inquisitive as to the manner in which connubial bliss celebrates its gladdest rites!

It were sacrilege to unveil the mysteries of wedded affection, or to hearken to the cries of the curious crowd that stands outside the temple of Venus begging admission into the sanctum sanctorum of this mighty shrine. 'Twere a crime.

This pen must decline such a task!

Vernon's visit was an extremely delightful one in every particular. His wife's mind was devoted to the business of providing him entertainment, and he enjoyed, or pretended to enjoy everything that she suggested with the greatest relish. And so, striving to please and to be pleased, his time passed very pleasantly—the four weeks of his stay at home, seeming after his return to the army, more like a delicious dream than the remembrance of real joys.

Mrs. Jacobs did not overlook the Captain's presence in C—town; and called upon the young officer, thinking, quite shrewdly, that it would be quite as well to remind the wife of her promise, under the pretense of tendering respect to the husband.

"Well, Miss Vernons," said the sly creature, having dropped in one morning, and found the Captain and his wife in a capital humor, "God knows I wishes you much joy now that you've got your husband back. Please the Lord, I 'spects it will be a terrible long time afore I'll see Bill any more."

"I hope not, Mrs. Jacobs," said Alice in a tone of sympathy. "The war will not last long, I trust; and, if it does, he can get a leave."

"Oh! Then you've spoke to the Cap'en? That's a darling, as I always said you was!"

She burst into crocodile tears, and turned to Roland.

"And you are agwine to let Bill come when you goes back, Cap'en? Sence I heard from Polly Piner, that Josh Kinsaul has died the day after you left Manassey; I'd dun give up all hope of ever seein my poor Bill anymore—I had —"

And she blubbered distressingly.

Captain Vernon undertook to comfort her, and was soon rewarded for his efforts by a cheerful smile from Corporal Jacobs' wife, as she returned to the inquiry,

"Is you agwine to let Bill come?"

"Yes. I'll try to get him a furlough. But *is* Josh Kinsaul dead? He was perfectly well when I left camp. Do you know what he died of, Mrs. Jacobs?"

"Well they do say—Polly Piner got it in her letter, and so did Nancy Bente—that Josh are really dead; and now that I remember correctly, Polly said that her old man said that Josh died of a sudden."

The muscles of the Captain's mouth gave a twitch, and there was a faint sound of a suppressed titter at his elbow.

Mrs. Jacobs having secured the pledge of Captain Vernon that his influence would be used to get her husband home for a short while, seized the first opportunity to effect a retirement, much to the relief of Roland and his wife.

It was not long after Vernon's return to C—town that the announcement came that the Company from that place, which had fought gallantly at Bethel—and it must not be forgotten that in November, 1861, the war had been in progress so short a time, and so few battles had been fought, that Bethel was one of the most celebrated engagements of the struggle—was on its way home.

This intelligence was rapidly and generally disseminated, and the citizens of the town and its vicinity united immediately in making fit preparations for its distinguished welcome.

Garlands were woven to deck the brows of the returning heroes; banners, with appropriate inscriptions, were fashioned and swung across all of the principal streets; the Town Hall was put in order, and all the arrangements for a grand illumination (as the arrival of the boat which was to bring the troops would, in all probability, be delayed until after nightfall), were made, Vernon, rising above all little jealousies, participating very heartily in the work of preparation, and accepting an invitation to deliver the reception speech in behalf of the citizens.

The night of the fifteenth of November came. The steamer *Magnolia* reached the wharf at eight o'clock, amid the cheers of hundreds of men, women and children who had repaired to the river bank to meet the returning soldiers. The troops broke ranks, and sprang upon the shore, as soon as the

prow of the steamer touched the wharf; and then followed a scene that beggars all description.

Wives rushed frantically into the arms of long absent husbands; mothers caught their boys in the close embrace of love, and fondly patted them on their heads and kissed them again and again; shy young girls, crying "Oh! brother!" or "Oh! father!" darted at their sweethearts, and gave and received bliss-stirring kisses that caused their lips to tingle and burn, and their hearts to beat madly with passionate yearnings; even Morrisson—the crafty old scamp!—with nobody in all that crowd that he might rightfully kiss, sloshed about in the dark, and seized a half hundred different young ladies in his embrace, and before they could recover from their astonishment, shouting, "Oh! sister!" or "Ah! Lucy!" or "My dear mother!" secured his full share of the caresses that were so plentiful that night. This scene of confusion at length was brought to an end by the mandate of the Orderly Sergeant:

"Fall in! Fall in!"

When the ranks were formed, the column, preceded by a brass band that played "Hi! Billy Martin, Tip toe—Tip toe," and "The Jay Bird Died of the Whooping-Cough," and "Gotten any Gooden Thing," and other equally exhilarating and soul-stirring martial airs, in platoons, right in front, flanked by crowds of shouting boys and droves of excited and delighted girls, mixed in a very unmilitary and democratic jumble, marched through the decorated and illuminated streets, now trailing arms to pass under a triumphal arch, now cheering as they were attracted by the mottoes, "HAIL TO THE BRAVE!" and "WELCOME HOME, YE HEROES OF BETHEL!" and "THE CITIZEN SOLDIER OF THE PRIDE AND PROTECTION OF THE PEOPLE!"—sentiments which were applauded to the echo by the crowd.

At length the Town Hall was reached. Here the crowd of citizens was dense and enthusiastic, and received the troops with huzzah after huzzah.

All preliminaries having been arranged, Captain Vernon stepped forward amid the acclamations of the spectators and soldiers, and delivered a happily conceived speech,

which did his heart and head infinite credit, and evoked the rapturous applause of the listening multitude.

Mr. Morrisson—still a Corporal—had been chosen by the military to make their response. The festivities of the evening had an exhilarating influence on him, for he was in one of his funniest and most extravagant moods. How such an effect was produced by such a cause, it is impossible to divine unless on the presumption that some of the young ladies kissed by him at the landing had been imbibing rather freely.

When Vernon concluded his speech, the Corporal came forward with a very soldierly strut, and bowing with an air of the greatest dignity, commenced his speech, talking with impressive solemnity and in deep sonorous tones.

His first words made an impression :

"Clad in the habiliments in which I dug trenches at Yorktown; accoutred with the same belts and cartouch-box that I wore on the memorable night my picket guard was captured while sleeping serenely on their posts, dreaming of the loved ones at home; armed with the identical musket that I laid down with reluctance to hold Col. Magruder's horse while the battle raged at Bethel; flourishing the somewhat worn but highly-treasured pocket-handkerchief with which I dried the tears that bedewed my cheeks when I looked upon the inanimate form of the unfortunate mule whose life was yielded up in that engagement, a cheerful sacrifice upon the altar of patriotism; I stand in the midst of my home people unhurt, unharmed, and uninjured, with a pean of thanksgiving for escape from the dread perils of war—perils that cost North Carolina the life of the brave Wyatt on the field of Bethel—on my lips; and with the reverberations of your joy at my return ringing in my ears—stand in your midst to express for myself and my comrades our deep sense of gratification at the kindness which has prompted this flattering reception."

"Three cheers for Morrisson!" shouted an excited boy of diminutive proportions, whose soul was bursting with glorious emotions of patriotism; but whose voice, unfortunately for its strength and clearness,

was unmistakably seriously afflicted with a disease known as "goslings," peculiar to youths of his age.

"Three times three and a tiger!" heartily responded the frantic crowd, yelling, every man of them, like a pack of denizens of the infernal regions.

Morrisson improved the breathing space thus given by pouring out a suspicious-looking liquid from a suspicious-looking silver pitcher into a suspicious-looking silver goblet, which he held toyingly in his hand until he was suffered to proceed.

Quiet having been restored, he raised the goblet—Corporal Morrisson was exceedingly polite and courteous when glowing with thought or whisky—and, bending his tall form gracefully, with a majestic wave of his hand, said, while his red eyes sparkled merrily and his rubicund nose flushed brightly,

"Fellow Citizens, before continuing my remarks, I beg leave, on the strength of our reunion with our friends, to drink to the very good health of you all."

There was another shout. Then a hundred cat-cries, and a fight between a little negro and a small white boy, in a distant corner of the Hall—a disturbance of so much insignificance to the orator that he did not halt in his address to let them have it out fairly.

Owing to the confusion which ensued upon the movement of the police to make a summary ejection of the combatants, the final passages of Corporal Morrisson's eloquent speech were lost to his auditory, but the satisfaction of the populace was attested by resounding cheers and pealing bursts of acclamation as he took his seat.

Immediately after the dispersion of the throngs of citizens, the heroes of Bethel were invited to partake of a bounteous repast which groaned on a hospitable board, loaded with tempting edibles and refreshing drinkables; and here, expending the customary wit and jest of such occasions, toasting their hosts, and sweeping everything clean, they spent the night in revelry.

Lieutenant Adams, for some reason unknown, came home in a bad humor, and did not join in these festivities; but hastened to the Parsonage where his wife

awaited his coming with all a loving woman's anxiety. He received her demonstrations of delight with a gruffness that chilled her buoyancy and repressed her joy, and gave her the first cruel, heartless, un pitying repulse of her tenderness that she had received since her marriage.

It was far from being a happy meeting, and they moodily retired at an early hour—he to dwell upon his own thoughts—she to weep at his hardness and coldness.

The night had advanced far, when, in response to an abrupt inquiry from her husband, Dolores answered with a blush in her very voice,

"I shall probably get through in a month."

"Well, I suppose it can't be helped now," he ungraciously responded; "but it is hard enough to provide for you, without having the additional encumbrance of a nurse and baby. You ought to have known that I didn't want any children while this infernal war lasts."

"And, pray Paul, how could I prevent it?"

Three weeks passed, and Dolores was forced to take to her bed. Her husband, who should have been rejoiced at the prospect which her illness gave, instead of watching with a brimming, foaming, bumper, eager to drink to the health of the mother, and a long life to the heir, vented his displeasure at the event in sour looks and crosser words.

Then came the bright boy with Dolores' eyes—came to console for the loss of a husband's love.

Poor babe! Dolores bent a sorrowful face, with an appealing look for it to die, upon her child; but her supplication was unheeded—and the infant lived.

Babyhood does not appreciate grief, and is not self-sacrificing!

CHAPTER V.

VERNON's furlough expired early in December; and parting reluctantly with his wife he rejoined his command at Centreville.

The winter was spent in inactivity; and, save an occasional picket tour, the F——th Regiment had an easy time until March. Then the Army of the Potomac fell back upon the Rappahannock; and, afterwards, a greater part of it was transferred to the Peninsula, to support General Magruder.

Here the month of April was consumed in waiting in the Yorktown trenches—a very disagreeable phase of military life.

A fight was anticipated; but the suspense was protracted from day to day; and, at the close of each successive week, there seemed to be no greater probability than before, of a speedy termination of the overwrought anxiety of the troops.

When May came, however, everything grew more active and the chances of a battle doubled.

On the morning of the third of May, Adjutant Joek Wright detailed Captain Vernon's company to relieve a company of the 24th Virginia Regiment then on picket in front of the fortifications occupied by Early's Brigade of D. H. Hill's Division; and, at the same time, informed the Captain that he would not be required to execute his instructions until sundown that afternoon.

About six o'clock P. M., Vernon received a message from Colonel Ashe to report at once at regimental headquarters. The Captain had already formed his men, and was on the point of going out to relieve the picket when this message was delivered; but he immediately started to obey the Colonel's summons, and in a few seconds stood uncovered in the presence of that officer.

"Ah! Captain!" was the salutation of Colonel Ashe. "I sent for you to say that you need not go on picket—the Virginia Company will not be relieved. We retreat from here to-night; and it will act as a part of the rear guard."

"And we are to run again, Colonel!" he exclaimed. "I would rather fight here!"

"So would I, Vernon—so would I!" responded Colonel Ashe. "But it is our part to obey, not to criticise."

"Which we all will do submissively—but why is this retreat ordered? Is General Johnston afraid of McClellan?"

"You remember what old Scott said—

Beware of Johnston's retreats!' There's something deep in it, that we can't see."

"I hope so; but the men would rather fight!"

A few hours later the army of General Johnston was on the march for Williamsburg. The specks which had floated like mists on the edge of the horizon during the afternoon, had scattered ere the night set in, all over the heavens, grown into clouds pregnant with rain; and now, ahead of the trembling legions, were these massive banks of black, threatening storm-clouds out of whose womb, with pealing thunders, flashing lightnings darted, while a torrent poured down upon the earth. Behind came the pursuing foe closing rapidly upon the heels of the retreating army. And through the pelting storm, until the skies cleared and the morning star trembled in the east, pursuer and pursued pressed forward.

The sun rose in splendor the next morning—the rain having ceased just before dawn—and its glancing rays touching the pendant drops on the leaves of the forest trees caused them to glisten brightly.

About ten o'clock the Fifth Regiment halted beneath the shade of a belt of moss-covered oaks, which grew beyond the limits of the Old Dominion's once gay Capital.

"I wish," said Captain Vernon in a petulant mood, as he dropped wearily upon the ground, "I wish that McClellan would overtake our trains, or so jeopardize them as to force Joe Johnston to fight to save them from capture. He is so skillful in retreating that it is said he has never lost a wagon. Perhaps, if one of his trains should be endangered, he would give us a chance to fight. I'm disgusted with this Fabian policy. It breaks the spirits of the men; it fosters discontent; and it makes cowards of the valiant. Oh! for a dash of Federal cavalry at Longstreet's wagons, which are all behind!"

Jock Wright listened to his friend's outburst in silence—but, the next minute, he cried,

"Hush! That was surely a cannon! By all the Gods of Greece, Roland Vernon, your wish is about to be gratified! They're fighting back yonder on the Yorktown road—man alive, don't you hear the booming of the guns?"

Boom! Boom! Boom!

It was so! Boom! Boom! The cannon roared back towards Yorktown.

"Captain Vernon! Where is Captain Vernon?" shouted Colonel Ashe. And then catching sight of the young officer, he cried, "Get your company under arms at once, Captain!"

There was fighting to be done without doubt; but Vernon was up to his word. He went back cheerfully!

A few muttered words of parting—a warm grasp of the hand—and Captain Vernon left Colonel Ashe standing by the roadside like a statue, watching him as he made his way towards the town, on the further limit of which the conflict was in progress.

In less than an hour, Vernon was moving to and fro amid the smoke of the engagement, his face flushed with excitement, and his voice ringing loudly above the din of the strife, as he delivered his orders to the infantry detachment which had been sent under his command to support Captain Reilly's battery, which was obstinately fighting the advance guard of Federal cavalry.

The soldier was in his element. His passionate love of the glorious battle-peril was being satisfied.

At seven o'clock that evening he was back at the regimental bivouac, without having sustained the loss of a single man—back, asleep, and dreaming.

Jock Wright shared his blanket that night and they slumbered without a thought of the morrow's danger, and without a premonition of the separation which was so imminent.

Ah! It is a happy regulation of Nature that we are not permitted to peep into the future! We are spared much distress that the warning of ill would occasion; and escape the risk of growing cowardly by thinking of coming trials!

CHAPTER VI.

AT an early hour the following morning, Captain Vernon had his company ready to proceed on the march. The sky was gloomy and the lowering clouds betokened rain; which was unfortunate, as the artillery wagons and other trains had already passed through Williamsburg and were now far on the road to Richmond. The baggage wagons of Longstreet's division were alone behind.

A hard march seemed to be in store for the half-rested troops of the Army of the Peninsula, for the roads, in bad condition from the rains of the two nights before, would be cut up so badly that the foot troops must experience great impediments in their progress.

Notwithstanding this, D. H. Hill's division, to which the F——th Regiment was now attached, being a part of Earley's brigade, was waiting by the road to commence the tramp. Of all the divisions, save Longstreet's which was behind, it alone was not in motion.

About eight o'clock brigade after brigade commenced pressing on in retreat, until all were moving. But before the column had proceeded a quarter of a mile, a staff officer, riding at full speed, came out from Williamsburg, inquiring as he galloped for General Hill.

He brought a countermand of the order to move on. The enemy was pressing Longstreet, and forcing him to fight—successfully so far! Still Genl. Hill's division might be needed to co-operate with him in his effort to repulse this attack, and it was kept behind to serve in such an exigency.

The column was halted and brought to the right about; then it was slowly conducted back to the campus of the venerable William and Mary College, and there held in reserve.

There the impatient troops waited for hours, listening to the advancing and receding fire—waited until four o'clock in the afternoon.

At that hour the climax, the agony, the crisis of the battle was reached. A breathless horseman, his steed white with foam, rode up to General Hill and nervously said:

"Genl. Longstreet asked me to say—Will you advance at once and put your line in connection with him, your right resting on the left of the Yorktown road?"

"Very well, Major."

"He said, Will you please be quick? A heavy force, under Genl. Hancock, is making an effort to turn his flank."

"Yes, Major; tell him I have started."

Genl. Hill put his division in motion; and, tramping through the muddy streets of Williamsburg, the troops pressed on to meet the advancing foe.

"Ah, Jock!" cried Col. Ashe, in a gay tone, as he mounted his horse to ride forward to the fray. "Ah, Jock, now you will have an opportunity to flesh your maiden sword. Don't you relish the prospect?"

"I cannot say that I do, Colonel," replied the usually jocose, light-hearted, and always brave Adjutant. "I shall do my duty, sir; but I really don't like such work."

About a mile from Williamsburg, on the road which leads from that town to Yorktown, as far as the eye could reach along the level ground on either side, the view being interrupted here and there by a clump of woods, the lines of Longstreet and McClellan were engaged in fierce conflict.

Heintzelman was in immediate command of the Federal forces, and his troops were fighting well, the victory wavering in the balance, when Hill, riding in advance of his men, joined Longstreet, who, in company with General Johnston, was watching the combat with great anxiety.

The Confederates were standing like men of adamant before the deadly charges that were being made, one after another, against their weak lines.

The foe in front was earnest, but the greatest damage was not inflicted by him. On the right of the road, coming from Yorktown, there was a line of redoubts, strongly built, which were thrown, up by skillful engineers, for the protection of the town, in the event of assault from that quarter; but these were not occupied by the Confederates, all of whom were fighting on the other side of the road. Worse, they had been seized by Genl. Hancock, who was firing upon Longstreet in left and rear, the heavy guns of his batteries pouring a most

destructive and harassing enfilade and reverse fire into the hard pressed Southernners.

When Genl. Hill's division reached the point where the three commanders were in consultation, Earley's brigade and the Alabama brigade were ordered to deploy on the left of the road, while the rest of the troops were sent to reinforce the sorely assailed lines which were coping valiantly with the attacking force in front.

Genl. Hill followed those brigades which had been deployed on the left to confront Hancock, and marching them by the flank he soon carried them into position for attacking.

Halting a few minutes to breathe before commencing the desperate work which awaited them, Genl. Hill rode from regiment to regiment encouraging his men. At last he reached the F——th regiment. He recognized the Colonel. He had confidence in the men. He relied on the skill of their commander, and on their valor. He knew they could be depended upon for any enterprise.

Riding to the centre of this command, he brought it to attention and addressed it :

"Soldiers!" said he, his cold stern eye glaring at them steadily. "I want you to make this a proud day for North Carolina. Just through that skirt of woods in front is a battery which must be taken. You are to charge it with fixed bayonets; and are not to fire until you can touch the breasts of your adversaries with the muzzles of your pieces. You must give them cold steel and they can't stand before your impetuous advance. I rely on this Regiment—your State looks to you to sustain its honor. Then make yourselves immortal on this field. Will you do it?"

"WE WILL!" was the cry of them all—speaking as one man.

Then rang along the line, the word of command.

"FORWARD MARCH!"

The skirt of woods was passed; the steady line passed out into the open field beyond, elbow to elbow in grim array.

Whiz! whiz! Cannister and shell swept from right to left down the line; but, with a tramp as regular as on drill or parade, the F——th Regiment moved out of the

cover of the woods in full sight of the artillerists.

"CHANGE DIRECTION TO THE LEFT! THE REDOUBT! IT MUST BE TAKEN AND THAT QUICK!"

Fully a half mile ahead, looming up in the distance through the smoke of the battle, stood the strong field fortress which was to be assaulted. Colonel Ashe had been deceived as to its position by the firing of a light battery which retreated as his regiment emerged from the forest. A hundred and fifty paces in advance of this redoubt, a brigade of Federal infantry supported the six gun field battery, which was now unlimbering, having been driven back to this position. The heavy ordnance, through the embrasures of the fort, kept up an incessant firing.

Colonel Ashe's regiment now confronted this position and force, and he pressed his men forward to storm and capture the fortress. The ranks grew thinner every step the troops trudged through the deep mud in which they were sinking to their knees.

With the calmness of despair the noble regiment continued to face the appalling terrors of the fearful charge.

Two of the regiments sent to accompany them, faltered and turned back, panic stricken; and yet through all, marching bravely to the goal where Honor or Death—one or the other—certainly awaited, this single regiment drove back the battery and its supporting brigade, and in a few minutes it was crouching under the eaves of the fortification which they were ordered to seize.

But the support pledged them did not come—the comrades who started with them to make this forlorn venture had turned back.

Unassisted, this regiment was unable to climb the work, was unable to gather the fruits of its valor. More than half of the men had fallen in the charge.

Yet the brave Ashe refused to retire; and they lay down to watch upon their glorious post of peril and honor.

During the advance the Color-bearer of the regiment fell; and, in rapid succession, every member of the Color-Guard shared his fate. Nine times the battle-flag was lifted—nine times it dropped.

The Tenth time it was raised; the tenth time it was cut down. No arm durst unfurl it again—no heart has the stout courage to do the sublime deed.

Not one! Yes, there is one, and he comes forward to risk the almost certain death!

IT IS VERNON!

The Carolinian's face is aglow with pride; his soul is nerved with ambition; he seizes the staff; presses far ahead of the line; waves the flag defiantly; dares Fate's wrath; and is not touched.

A shout burst from the hoarse throats of his fellows,

"THREE CHEERS FOR CAPTAIN VERNON!"

The Federal General Hancock, witnessing the brilliant feat, raised his voice loud above the raging storm of the conflict, and chivalrously shouted.

"THREE CHEERS FOR THE BRAVE REBEL! HIP! HIP! HURRAH!"

The troops of both armies ceased firing and joined in the splendid testimonial to a valiant soldier's good deed of courage.

Seeing that he was making a useless sacrifice of his men in trying to keep this position, General Hill ordered the regiment to retire, and it fell back reluctantly under a dreadful and excruciating succession of destructive volleys.

Many a gallant officer and faithful and daring soldier was left behind. Among the rest poor Jock Wright, who was shot down early in the engagement.

Until the battle was over Vernon did not learn of this misfortune of his friend, and even when informed that Jock was among the missing could not ascertain whether he was dead, or wounded. His first satisfactory information was from Col. Ashe, who overtook Roland as they were retreating from Williamsburg the next morning about daybreak.

"Poor Jock!" he exclaimed. "Poor Jock! He is certainly dead. Struck in the temple by a Minie ball. Corporal Jacobs saw him and is confident that he is dead by this time."

"I fear there is no doubt. Oh! oh! What shall we say to his friends? What shall we tell her?"

"Her? Who?" asked the Colonel.

"Belle Woodruff! You know they were engaged to be married. Poor Belle!"

"Poor girl!" sighed the Colonel in sympathy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE march from Williamsburg was a hard one, the army tramping at night, and resting during the day, until the Chickahominy was reached.

Vernon bore the unparalleled hardships which were entailed upon officers and men in this retreat with quite as much endurance as belonged to the hardiest of the troops. But he was of feeble constitution, and when the army went into camp near Richmond he was seriously ill with an attack of bilious fever—so much so, that Doctor Effingham, the surgeon of the Regiment, sent him to a field hospital, where he remained about two weeks in a state of great debility.

In the meantime, many troops from the South—some veterans, some recently entered the service—were massed at the Confederate Capital, to strengthen the army of Johnston, which awaited the attack of McClellan, who was approaching slowly but surely behind his parallels, besieging Richmond.

Paul Adams, holding a commission as Captain, came with one of these newly organized commands; and was in charge of the right company of the regimental line.

About noon on the 31st of May a messenger brought a note to Captain Vernon, who was still very sick in the hospital, which was immediately handed to him by one of the attendants.

The note was from Col. Ashe, and was in the following words:

DEAR ROLAND:

We are preparing to attack McClellan. I'm hard up for officers. If possible, and agreeable, come get well in the battle's excitement. But don't come if you feel too weak. We need you; but I don't want you to be imprudent.

Truly yours,

R. ASHE.

May 31st, 1862.

Captain Vernon did not hesitate. He instantly put on his clothes, told Doctor Effingham where he was going, and in fifteen minutes joined his comrades. Men and officers crowded around and welcomed him cordially back to camp.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, Earley's brigade was placed in position, its right resting on the Williamsburg road, near the clump of trees, from which this engagement took its name—SEVEN PINES. The F—th Regiment was on the left of the brigade and Vernon's company was on the left of the regiment. The advance was to be made against formidable works, protected by swampy woods and well constructed *abattis*.

The regiment to which Paul Adams belonged was on the right of the brigade next to Earley's left and Adams' company was on the right of that regiment. So that Captain Vernon and Captain Adams—old rivals in peace, rivals still in war—were to battle in sight of each other.

It was nearly four o'clock, when, preceded by a long line of skirmishers, this force advanced, by the right of companies to the front, under an annoying fire.

With the exception of a small reserve, the entire army was rushed upon McClellan at the same moment; and, before its onset, the Federal skirmishers and advanced lines retired in haste to their works.

When the Confederate army had approached so near to the Federal line of battle as to be compelled to form a compact rank of assault, and to cease its advance by the head of companies, the order was given to bring the companies into line. Captain Adams, unfortunately for his tactical reputation, neglected, while moving through the woods, to preserve the proper distance from the company on his right; and, consequently, when the order, "By companies into line!" was given, his right was lapped by Vernon's left. This occasioned confusion and checked that impulsion which the touching of elbows never fails to impart.

The dash upon the Federal works was met gallantly, and a most galling and staggering fire of musketry was opposed to the advance of the charging line. Adams' men were thrown into disorder by these terrific

volleys and were with great difficulty restrained from deserting the field. But the closed ranks of the veteran regiment behind them, steadied them for a moment, until the battle raged so furiously that the most daring soldiers quailed.

Suddenly there was a break in Adams' company, and the fugitives burst through Vernon's serried ranks, scattering his men so that they could no longer be kept in their places. Following which, was a disgraceful and precipitate flight.

Vernon saw at a glance that it would be a hopeless undertaking to attempt to rally the frightened troops under the hailstorm of bullets that poured down from the fire-lined breastworks, under the edges of which the Confederate lines were struggling with superhuman daring.

Deliberately, he turned to follow the fugitives, determining to form them again under the cover of the woods, and to bring them back to the attack in order.

Walking a little way to the rear, he found Adams, bravely trying to rally the scattered force, but accomplishing no good by his efforts.

"My God! what *shall* I do? I am ruined—what shall I do?" was Adams' piteous exclamation to Vernon when overcome with shame he found that his rival had witnessed the disaster. "Appeal does no good—example does no good—nothing does any good!"

Vernon was scrutinizing his behavior. He saw that Adams was brave, but wild with excitement. He was astonished; for Paul was usually cool, and possessed excellent self-command. But then, he did not remember that out of battle he himself was quickly angered, or confused, but in battle always deliberate. A curious fact! These men were the antipodes of each other; and the peace nature and the war nature of each was at antipodes.

"By heaven, I know what I can do!—I can die gallantly on the breastworks!" exclaimed Paul Adams, when, at length, he was convinced of the impossibility of carrying his men back to their place in the line.

Then, bent on perishing honorably, he darted to the front. Vernon stopped him with a word.

"Fie, Adams—fie! Come with *me*;

come back to the road! We'll reform our companies out of range of those guns, and yet be in time! COME!"

And with the deliberation of a Wellington, Vernon started to execute his purpose.

Adams hesitated a moment, as if in doubt; but, taking confidence from his rival's manner, followed him, submissively accepting his suggestions and relying on his judgment.

Vernon was not mistaken: in a few seconds they rallied their men in the road, stopped the panic, marched back to their comrades, and assisted them in taking the heavy battery which for an hour had poured its volleys of grape, shrapnel, and shell into their ranks, and made a terrific slaughter.

Late in the afternoon, Vernon fell from sheer exhaustion, and was ordered to the hospital by Colonel Ashe. Within its walls, during all the night, and part of the next day, he lay and nervously heard the crash and thunder of the distant conflict.

A week after the battle, there being no material improvement in his condition, Roland Vernon was advised to apply for a sick leave; and, upon the certificate of Doctor Effingham, was granted sixty days.

He left for home about the 10th of June, and was fortunate enough to escape the terrible series of engagements of the Seven Days around Richmond. He remained away from his regiment for many weeks, most of the time severely ill from the disease by which he was originally prostrated. During this sickness, however, he had the consolation of a woman's tenderness and sympathy, for Alice waited upon him like an angel of love, as she was, and ministered to his wants with a touching fondness and devotion.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROLAND VERNON recovered slowly; but about the middle of August he began to rally, and then to convalesce rapidly.

His faithful nurse had attended by his bed-side eager to alleviate his suffering and to catch the glance of love with which she

was repaid for her gentle devotion. She was glad to have him well again; but she did not relish the idea of his becoming strong enough to return to duty in the field; notwithstanding which, he was in a fever of excitement to rejoin his regiment.

At length his recovery was so complete that Alice even could not find a good reason for detaining Roland any longer; so about the first of September he got ready to leave, with the expectation of overtaking Genl. Lee's army on its march towards Washington, afterwards changed into an advance into Maryland.

Captain Vernon's experience, as a soldier, had taught him that it was by no means certain that he would survive another campaign; and, as he was utterly unprepared, as respected the arrangement of his business, for death, he resolved to make his will, and a provision for the execution of the strange trust imposed upon him by his grandfather.

To carry out this idea, he wished to have an interview with his father for the purpose of securing his advice and assistance in the accomplishment of his plans.

"You will be in your office at four or five?" asked Roland, a day or two before the time appointed for his departure, as his father started to town one morning.

"I really do not know. Anything important?"

"Yes, sir. I leave this on the first of September; and I have some business, about which I wish to consult you, that must be attended to before I start."

"Then I will meet you at five—five precisely."

"Thank you, sir."

"Be punctual! I have an engagement with Morrisson at six."

Roland went to town in the afternoon, and reaching his father's office at five, found him disengaged, ready to hear him make a detailed statement of his case.

Roland was a master of the art of delivering luminous, terse, and comprehensive statements, and at an intimation from Col. Vernon that he was waiting on him, he at once proceeded to put him in possession of the facts, and opinions, and papers upon which he desired to receive counsel.

The Colonel listened in silence; and when his son concluded, took the instruments which he had prepared, and gave a close examination. In this examination at least three quarters of an hour were spent.

"Didn't I hear some one enter the front office?" inquired Col. Vernon, as he carefully folded the last paper.

"I think not, sir," replied Roland; "but I will see."

Rising from his seat, the young man walked to the door, and looked through into the front office, but found it unoccupied. He did not hear the rustling of the library curtains, nor perceive the form of a man that was hidden in one of the alcoves.

When Roland returned, and reported that no one was to be seen in the front room, Col. Vernon remarked,

"The papers are drawn so that there can be no possibility of misconstruction; and will serve their end admirably. They are specific and sufficiently clear to guide the trustees, yet are sufficiently guarded not to reveal the secret which you desire to preserve. The most experienced lawyer could not have done this work better than you have performed it; and, if there should be any occasion for their use—which I trust may not be the case for years to come—they will plainly indicate your wishes."

"The fact of the trust being sealed and deposited in bank, until absolute need for it occurs, will not invalidate these instruments?"

"No. A secret trust, even if only imposed verbally, can be enforced in a Court of Equity. There will be no trouble on that score."

"Then I will draw off a copy of the letter of Grandfather Leigh, seal it, and deposit it in the C—town Bank."

"I think that would be best; and for the guidance of the trustee of this instrument, and the executor of the will, you might insert in both papers, a clause disclosing the place of the deposit."

"I will. Now that this is settled, I have a request to prefer. I wish you to be Trustee to the Deed, and Executor of the Will. May I hope that you will oblige me?"

"Certainly, my son. I will do my best

to act for you, as I believe you would act for yourself. Be assured of that!"

"Then, sir, I shall go back to the army with a light heart and an easy mind. If my wife is beyond the reach of any disaster that may befall me, and if my promise is discharged to the letter of my pledge to grandfather, I have no care, and can die like a brave soldier, if need be. I thank you, sir, for your assurance."

"And you say that Morrisson is concerned in this trust. Very strange—very strange! Do you think he is aware of the fact? You know there is a peculiarity in the will of Mr. Leigh, and that he examined it, in settling the estate with me?"

"Indeed? Ah! now I do remember that you made me employ a lawyer, or do the work myself. Really, I cannot conjecture whether he suspects or not. Probably he—"

Roland stopped short. His attention was attracted by a cough, and then a step in the other room.

"It's Morrisson!" whispered the Colonel, looking at his watch. "Exactly six!"

"Good evening! Ah! you're engaged," and Mr. Morrisson, who had walked to the door of the back room, started to retire.

"No. Come in, Morrisson! We are through."

"How are both of you? Roland, you are looking better, boy! I'm punctual you perceive, Colonel."

And the veteran lawyer took a seat.

Roland excused himself directly; and left his father and Mr. Morrisson to conduct their conference privately, hurrying home to join his sweet little wife, from whom he was so soon to be long separated.

CHAPTER IX.

ANXIOUS to find Colonel Vernon at his office at the hour of his appointment, Mr. Morrisson set out at half-past five to fulfill his engagement.

A ten minutes' walk brought him to Col. Vernon's office, and he entered; but, perceiving the father and son in close consul-

tation, so deeply engaged that neither noticed his entrance, he sat down and waited, endeavoring not to attract their attention.

Here Morrisson remained until Colonel Vernon, finishing an inspection of the papers in which he had been engaged, suggested that some one had entered the front office. Then, quick as thought, he glided into one of the alcoves of the library and pulled the curtains over himself to make his hiding-place secure. He determined to ascertain the subject of the conference between Vernons, father and son.

When Roland went back under the impression that their conversation was secure from eavesdroppers, and so told his father, Morrisson emerged from his covert, and drew near the inside door, through a crack of which he could overhear their interchange of views and watch their movements. He did not have to wait very long before he was repaid for his infamy.

"A secret trust! The Leigh will!" he muttered. "I knew there was some mystery about that instrument. And it's a Secret Trust! Perhaps it affects the bastard son! Ha! ha!" and he chuckled a low devilish laugh.

"But I must be very attentive!"

And with this observation he put his ear to the crack again.

Directly he rubbed his hands and his eyes sparkled:

"Yes; it does affect the bastard," he said. "John Morrisson may be the joint heir.—This is worth looking after, John!"

Turning his head he saw the face of the town clock through the window, and the hour hand was at six, and the minute hand was between ten and eleven. He started; but immediately afterwards put his ear back to the crack. He listened three or four minutes longer, and then found that he was not likely to make any further discovery.

He looked at the clock again; crept out from behind the door, and cautiously made his way to the front entrance.

Here he waited until the minute hand on the town clock indicated twelve; and, at that moment, rose and strutted boldly into the back office, with a noise and bustle, and the air of a man just entered.

Neither of the Vernons suspected him of

eavesdropping; and he conducted his business with the father with the most admirable *nonchalance*.

Their interview ended, Colonel Vernon went to Rushbrook, and Mr. Morrisson hurried back to his own office.

After reaching this den, Morrisson lit his gas, and then took a seat by an open window.

"James Leigh," said he, talking to himself in a confidential tone, "died leaving property worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He made a will, and by that will he bequeathed his entire estate to Roland Vernon. Now, James Leigh had a son, or thought he had a son, who ought to have received a part of his estate; but, unfortunately, that person was—well, he was not James Leigh's legitimate son. Consequently, if James Leigh had publicly recognized this person by making him one of his heirs, he would have compromised the dignity and reputation of his family. But James Leigh was a man to do justice if the heavens fell, so he secretly provided for that person by instructing Roland Vernon to divide the property with him. This is indicated by the closing clause of the will, and by the fact that James Leigh imposed a secret trust upon Roland Vernon."

John Morrisson, having said this much, stopped and cogitated.

"Isn't this logical? Isn't the hypothesis strongly supported?" he continued. "Yet it can scarcely be so; for Roland Vernon, like his whole stock, is a young man of irreproachable honor, and Roland Vernon has never executed such a trust. Would Roland Vernon commit a fraud? Abstractly speaking, I should say, No—emphatically, No! But then human nature is weak, the world does not hold one thoroughly reliable man."

With this reflection Morrisson stopped again, and paused a few minutes to consider. After a few minutes' meditation he took a chew of tobacco, and, with a very thoughtful air, continued:

"Admitting that there has been fraud on the part of Vernon, what remedy has the person that he has wronged? There is no legal relief to be obtained; but a Court of Equity, which can deal with the Consciences of men, may force him to discover

his trust and force him to perform it. There's no doubt about that!"

Now Morrisson halted once more, and ruminated, at last breaking out into further soliloquy:

"But can that person establish his right? Can the proof be produced to identify anybody with the supposed illegitimate son of James Leigh? Yes; John Morrisson can convince any Court in Christendom that he is James Leigh's bastard. But will it pay? In money, yes. Will it cost anything? Yes; the loss of *all* social standing will inevitably result."

Morrisson got up and paced the room nervously; and it was a quarter of an hour before he uttered another word. Then he said:

"What social standing have I, that I may not profitably forfeit for a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars? Money will buy position in society. Yes; but not here in the South. Integrity, talent, polish, all combined, or an unstained pedigree—these are the requisite credentials. If I had moral worth and refinement, coupled with my ability, I could aspire to association with the best blood of the Cape Fear. Talent, however, backed by nothing else but wealth, will not achieve the coveted position. But, elsewhere! Oh, yes! In other states, in other countries, money will secure the *entree*!"

Morrisson now rose hastily from his seat and walked across the floor to an old trunk, from the bottom of which he drew forth a much worn portfolio, that was discolored with great age. Spreading this on his knee, he glanced hurriedly at many papers and after considerable search brought to light a folio of faded manuscripts. He separated these from the rest of the papers, and, putting them on the table near his right hand, returned all the others to their places and carried the portfolio back to the trunk. As he carelessly swung this, to pitch it into its place, a ring fell from it and rolled, without being discerned by him, into a crack of the floor near the fire-place.

Morrisson reseated himself, after doing this; and, unfolding the manuscript buried himself in its pages.

"So James Leigh pledged his word that neither she, nor her son, should ever need luxurious maintenance!" he exclaimed, after finishing the perusal of this paper. "He, during his lifetime, or his heirs, within twelve years from the date of his death, will respect a demand from Mary Morrisson or her child, upon the delivery of the enclosed ring, for any amount under ten thousand dollars, and these demands may be made as often as once in three years, and until one half of his fortune is exhausted in their satisfaction.' Good God, what a penitent and munificent old *Roué* he was—a prince of generous rakes!"

And with this exclamation he threw down the manuscript.

"But where is the ring? Never mind! It's in the trunk somewhere. I used to wear it; and, if it were lost, I could have another made. I'll reserve this pledge as a *dernier resort*. But, suppose I should be detected? Bah! How are they to know whether I am the son or not?"

Morrisson turned off the gas, as he said this; and, leaving his office, walked towards his hotel. When he got into the street he muttered to himself:

"Circumstances conspire wonderfully to support my surmise. He must have left half of his estate to the bastard. But will it be best to bring Vernon to account? Regard for him—and there's no estimating my good will for the boy—counsels, No!—but Self-Interest cries, Yes! Away with Feeling, I hearken to the voice of Reason. Ho! for a Chancery suit!"

Morrisson was not slow in acting after having resolved on his course, and he at once prepared and filed a petition in Equity, alleging that Roland Vernon was the Trustee of James Leigh to pay John Morrisson the sum of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, more or less, and asking the Court to enforce the performance of the trust.

And so, having instituted the suit, John Morrisson awaited the filing of Roland Vernon's answer.

CHAPTER X.

DURING Captain Vernon's absence from the regiment, six hundred conscripts, most of them opposed to the war, and without that sentiment which should inspire the true soldier, had been attached, to fill the depleted ranks of the Bloody F——th, as Col. Ashe's command was called after its heroic charge at Williamsburg. Sixty of these conscripts were assigned to Vernon's company and mixed with twenty veterans who survived the earlier campaigns.

The Bloody F——th participated in the battle of Boonsboro, or South Mountain, as it is frequently called; and, in that engagement, Vernon quickly learned that no reliance could be placed on the new levies sent from the Camps of Conscription.

With drill and discipline such material might be moulded into soldiers; but, as they were, utterly ignorant of the simplest movements of the school of the soldier, not knowing the difference between Right Face and Shoulder Arms, he was convinced that they would behave badly in their first severe encounter with the enemy.

He was not astonished, therefore, when, as the Bloody F——th was about to grapple with the strong lines of the Federal army at Sharpsburg, the entire command broke and fled incontinently. He had apprehended just such a result, and was prepared to do whatever could be done to remedy this misfortune.

Notwithstanding the fact that the whole brigade, shaken in its courage by such an example, quickly abandoned its position, despite the efforts of the officers, most of whom endeavored to hold their men to the work of repelling the enemy's assault, Vernon, when his regiment commenced its flight, outran the scattering and frightened troops, and, getting ahead of them, succeeded in rallying about fifty of his men and carrying them back to the fight.

"You don't desert me, as every one else has done, Captain Vernon—I knew I could rely on you!" was the complimentary salutation of Colonel Ashe as Vernon rejoined him, where he stood alone on the spot which the brigade, under his command—he being the senior Colonel and in tempo-

rary charge of the brigade—had occupied a few minutes before.

"It is because I was fortunate in stopping my men. I have never seen a more causeless or complete panic!"

"I have noticed, Captain, that good fortune on the battle field is the result of intellect and bravery."

Vernon bowed in recognition of this praise; and then observed:

"I doubt whether a fourth of the brigade can be brought back!"

"So do I!" growled the disgusted Colonel. "Indeed, I think it will be very foolish for us to remain here with any such hope. You had better seek some organized command and attach yourself to it—I will go to the rear and try to reform the brigade. But it will be hard work!"

"Just as you think best, Colonel!"

Vernon fell back in good order, until, on a hill a short distance to the left, he espied a line of Confederates. He led his men to this spot and inquired for the commanding officer.

"Yonder is General Evans!" remarked a Lieutenant of whom he sought this information.

"Where?"

"You see two officers on that hill?" he asked pointing to an eminence in the rear of his line. "Genl. Evans is there—he is the one sitting down!"

Vernon repaired to the point indicated, and found two officers in consultation. One he recognized as General Evans—the other was a stranger. He was a tall, vigorous, gray-haired man, with a bright eye, a benevolent smile, and grave but pleasant manners. He wore the undress of an officer—the three stars on each side of the collar of his sack indicating his rank to be that of a Colonel.

When Vernon approached, Genl. Evans was reclining on the hill-side, and the other, standing with a field-glass in his hand, was sweeping the horizon, watching the progress of the battle with a calm but interested demeanor.

"Will Genl. Evans allow me to attach my company to his brigade?" asked Vernon, addressing the hero of Leesburg.

"What brigade and what division do you

belong to?" interrupted the other officer, before Gen. Evans could reply.

"D. H. Hill's division—the brigade originally commanded by Earley, since by Garland, now by Col. Ashe!"

"Why are you separated from it?" sternly inquired the interrogator.

"It separated from me, sir!" responded Vernon, his eye flashing at the covert insinuation. "The brigade left the field in cowardly flight—I remained with my company. It alone, of all the rest of the brigade, is organized. Is *that* a sufficient reason, sir?"

"I beg your pardon, sir!" was the mild reply of the officer; and he continued questioning Vernon, without giving Evans an opportunity to speak. "What is your name, rank, and regiment?"

"Roland Vernon, Captain, F——th North Carolina Troops."

"Genl. Evans, I think you had as well let Captain Vernon attach his company to your brigade. If he deserves credit, make mention of him in your report—if, on the other hand, he acts discredibly let *me* know it!"

"And who the deuce are you?" wondered Roland. "Ranks Evans anyhow!"

Vernon started back to his company and was joined by Genl. Evans.

"Genl. Lee, and I, saw a large body of troops running pell-mell for the rear," said he; "but we did not know what command it was—it's bad—very bad!"

"GENL. LEE! Was that Genl. LEE—Genl. ROBERT E. LEE—who interrogated me so closely?" asked Vernon, with a start, remembering how impudently he had replied to one of his questions.

"It was!" said Evans. "And the best and greatest soldier of the world! By-the-by, I have a little superior whisky; join me in a drink to his good luck to-day."

"With great pleasure!"

And the Carolinians imbibed.

Vernon did not rejoin Col. Ashe that day; but stayed with Evans and fought furiously until night—fought under the bravest and most skillful division commander in the army. Late in the afternoon of the following day Vernon went back to his own brigade.

"Well, Captain," said Col. Ashe, when

he reported to that officer, "we are to leave Maryland to-night, and will go back to old Virginia badly whipped. McClellan is no sardine!"

"Extremely unfortunate, Colonel!" sadly rejoined Vernon.

"Yes, and damnably disgusting!" bitterly exclaimed the Colonel. "Disgusting! The idea of a gentleman hazarding his reputation on the behavior of those infernal conscripts. I'll resign—I swear, I will!"

CHAPTER XI.

EARLY in October, Captain Vernon received a letter from his father, informing him that Alice had just passed through an ordeal that all married ladies who love their husbands are expected to undergo; and that the stillness of Mrs. Adams' cottage was now broken by the cries of a little stranger, who, although not quite old enough to give any marked indications of the Vernon peculiarity of looks, temperament, or mind, was pronounced by all the old ladies, who had seen him, a very pretty baby, and wonderfully like his father.

Roland did not rest, after the reception of this intelligence, until he secured a brief leave of absence; whereupon, as fast as trains, steamboats and stages would carry him, he made his way to C——town, to pay his respects to the mother and her boy.

Alice was rejoiced at the return of her husband—rejoiced because his love, always so warmly and tenderly evinced, gushed out now from the fountain of his affection in a more profuse stream than ever—rejoiced because the young father was so proud and happy while caressing and frolicking with his infant son.

"My dear, dear husband!" she would cry, her heart full of gladness. "Who has more cause for gratitude than I? Who has such a husband? Who has such a boy? Who is so devotedly loved?"

Roland would wind his arms around her waist, and clasp her to his breast, and cover her lips with approving and endearing kisses, and caressingly whisper:

"My darling wife! who has so much reason to be happy as I? Who can claim such a treasure as mine? Who has such a peerless, precious wife?"

Alice's marriage had been productive of sweet results. Her husband was kind, considerate, and devoted; and she had no care on her mind, except the separation which the War rendered necessary, and the fear of losing her pride, her protector.

Meanwhile, how went the life matrimonial with Dolores? Was she as fortunate as her friend? Has the wedding-ring been a talisman to her, to drive away care and sorrow? or, has it pricked her finger with sore misfortunes and distress?

Dolores resides at the Parsonage—a parsonage no longer—and patiently watches by the bedside of her husband, who, severely wounded, writhes, and frets, and howls his curses throughout the livelong day.

The baby amuses himself on the floor with a trifling Confederate toy, which the mother has thrown to him, to beguile his infant fancy.

The old gayety, the merry laugh, the glad sparkle of the eye which belonged to the Dolores of yesterday cannot be traced in the Dolores of to-day. These have been uprooted from her nature, and a settled sadness has been substituted.

The promises to which Dolores looked forward on her bridal morn have not been fulfilled. Her face gives token of innumerable weepings and unutterable sufferings.

Dolores knows Paul Adams now, as Roland Vernon knew him, when he bade her beware of the wily dissembler.

Strange to say, however, Dolores loves him with all his discovered unworthiness; and this love enables her to bear her afflictions with unabating fortitude and un-murmuring fidelity to her wifely duties.

Adversity makes men fiends, sometimes; but noble women—such women as Dolores Adams—are invariably chastened, strengthened and sublimated by its visitations.

"Dolores, I wish you would send that child out of the room, he annoys me—I don't like children!" angrily groans the wounded husband. "They are great pests!"

"He was so quiet there, that I did not think you would care if he remained in the

room. You know I have no nurse, Paul!" the wife answered with an imploring look.

"Take him out—shut him up in a closet—put him to sleep—get him out of the way somehow. He is not in pain—I can't bear to see anybody look contented! Take him away!"

Dolores caught the baby in her arms, and, pressing him tightly, with all a mother's love, carried him, struggling against her yearning heart, out of the chamber in which Paul Adams lay. The baby screamed, of course; for it had been taken away from a pleasant amusement to gratify an irascible father's whim.

"Now, what's the use of making him squall so? The devil be off with you both!" yelled the brave Captain Adams—the tyrannical martinet of that household.

The wife's lips quivered, and her eyes moistened, as she closed the door, after passing through; and then she kissed her baby again.

Her thin hands were clasped together, her eye turned upwards, and a moan of anguish escaped from her lips.

"How long, O Lord! must I endure? How long before I will be released from the misery of this unloved existence. O God! will he never, never love me?"

The rose that the child tears into pieces, leaf by leaf, and stamps with his foot, emits as sweet an odor as when it blooms on the stem; and the heart of woman, crushed by the disdain or violence of him into whose keeping it is given, loves with as deep a passion as when most tenderly cherished.

Dolores' lack of respect for her husband did not destroy her affection!

CHAPTER XII.

It was Wednesday during the session of the Spring term of the Superior Court in C—town; and a large delegation of lawyers from other counties, and quite a crowd of country people were to be seen on the streets, and especially on the Court House Square.

The bell had been rung by the sheriff, to announce that the hour for the re-opening of Court had arrived; and little groups of attorneys, suitors, witnesses, and jurymen were walking in the direction of the Court-Room.

Among the rest were two persons who were sauntering along leisurely, talking as they went.

"So you have been kept out of your estate by Vernon. Ha! ha!" laughed one of these pedestrians. "One of Leigh's heirs! Where did you get that hallucination, Jack Morrisson?"

"If there's anything human for which I have a contempt, thorough and unbounded," replied the other—the veritable Jack Morrisson, so often before presented to the reader, his appearance indicating that he had been having a bout with dangerous John Barleycorn; "it's a drunken lawyer of a Court-week. My dear General, do you know that you are very drunk, very; and that you are exposing yourself to the ridicule of the rabble? I really think you had better go to bed, and stay there until you get sober."

"Excuse me, Jack—excuse me! I shall stay up to hear the Judge's decree in the case of Morrisson *vs.* Vernon. I desire to be of the first who tender their congratulations. I say, Morrisson, how do you like the answer that Vernon has filed? Wonderfully favorable to your little aspiration, isn't it? Ha! ha! ha!"

"General Woodruff," stiffly retorted the ex-Corporal, drawing himself up with a well assumed hauteur, "I have no disposition to jest with you. You will oblige me by desisting—your familiarity is very displeasing."

General Woodruff was just a little too deeply in for it—had taken just a few drinks too many to care a picayune for Mr. Morrisson's displeasure; and, being an incorrigible tease, continued, much to the disgust of his companion,

"Well, that secret trust illusion wasn't a bad fancy, my dear Corporal. Did it give you an improved credit with your washerwoman? The heir of a cool hundred thousand, and over, ought to have an excellent standing in laundry circles, and with landlords and barkeepers. But, my dear friend,"

he proceeded, putting his finger to his nose, and casting his eye at his brother counsellor with a good-humored leer, "I'm just a little concerned for you—I am afraid His Honor will fail to perceive the equity of your claim!"

"Drunken men will talk!" responded Morrisson in a loud tone, stopping a moment at the Court House door, around which several of the Counsellor's patrons from the country were standing; who, as he approached, held their mouths agape to catch any utterance from his lips, so great a man was he esteemed to be by a certain retinue of admirers, so great a wit, so profound an oracle. Bowing to his *constituency*, Morrisson continued, in a still louder voice that all might listen and laugh:

"If you positively refuse to go to bed and get sober, and will rattle on with your nonsense, may I beg of you a very great favor? Will you oblige me by not talking any more with your mouth?"

At this brilliant scintillation, the gaping crowd laughed heartily; and the facetious old anomaly glided past the General and entered the Court-room.

As Woodruff intimated, Vernon had filed an answer to Morrisson's petition, and a very conclusive answer at that. It was drawn with extreme caution, discovering fully enough of the nature of the trust imposed on him to topple over Morrisson's air castle; and yet it was guarded so that the real status of the estate, and the nature of the obligations coupled with its inheritance, was not disclosed.

Morrisson had been led astray by a very shrewd, but incorrect guess; and had stultified himself.

When the Equity docket was taken up on Thursday, and called over, a very brief examination of the pleadings was sufficient to evoke Judge Richards' direction that this matter should be dismissed.

That evening General Woodruff and Counsellor Morrisson reached the culminating point of the frolic on which they had been all the week. They spent most of the night together in a room of the Eagle Hotel, the principal inn of the town, having repaired to this retreat to keep each other company.

These worthies were in very different

moods that night. Morrisson was in a rage at having rendered himself ridiculous by bringing a suit in which he was obliged to be overthrown; while Woodruff was in great glee over a large fee which he had earned during the week.

They came down together to tea, and seemed to be in a very friendly humor; but retired about eight o'clock. About bedtime, Judge Richards, who occupied the adjoining apartment, upon going to his room, overheard them in a loud and excited dispute; but the angry and defiant tones soon subsided into a rumbling of voices such as might characterize an amicable conversation.

An hour later, however, the violence of altercation was indicated by the alarm that proceeded from their chamber, and the Judge sprang out of bed, and put on his clothes, and then rushed to their door, which stood ajar.

He got there just as they ceased wrangling the second time; but not too late to witness a very ludicrous scene—so ludicrous that he could not resist the temptation to remain and witness the *denouement*.

The room was a small one with two windows, one on each side of the fire-place, looking out into the stable-yard. Its furniture consisted of a double bedstead with high old-fashioned posts, on which was a mattress covered with clean white sheets and a blue knit spread, and set off with a couple of immaculate pillows; a common pine table; a washstand; a bureau, with a mirror attached. A smouldering fire burnt on the hearth. The table in the centre of the room contained a tin candlestick, holding a tallow dip, with a long drooping wick; two black bottles, one empty; a blue earthenware pitcher, with the mouth broken; two green glass tumblers, half full of a reddish liquid. A greasy pack of playing-cards were scattered over the floor.

The friends sat opposite one another. Morrisson, on the farther side of the table, on which his feet were cocked, his back turned to the fire. General Woodruff sat with his back to the door, his elbows on the table, and his chin in his hands, in an attitude of deep musing. Each glanced furtively at the other, as if weighing characters and estimating the chances of success in an im-

pending contest. Both were evidently at the acme of a horrible debauch.

When Judge Richards got to the door all was silence, neither of the lawyers seeming disposed to protract their discussion. The Judge stood and gazed at them, and turned to go back to his room; but he was drawn back irresistibly—General Woodruff, at that moment, commenced soliloquizing in a childish whine:

"I know a lawyer in this town," said he, "who was a poor boy—friendless and uneducated. He had some intellect, was studious and industrious, and I interested myself in bringing him to the notice of the community, and raised the means to send him to college. At that time I was only seven or eight years older than he, and just commencing to practice law. When he graduated I gave him tuition in my law-office, the use of my library, and, when he was licensed, introduced him to a good business. Afterwards he had political aspirations, and I got him nominated for the Legislature and secured his election."

"That's *me* he's talking about—the infernal old vagabond!" said Morrisson, arousing from a momentary stupor, and smiling with a half-drunken stare at his victim.

"Oh! Ingratitude! Thou—thou—why hast thou fled to brutish beasts?" resumed the General, without noticing Morrisson. "But, although I've done all that to advance the interests of that poor boy, although by my patronage he has grown to be a prosperous and successful leader of the bar, he forgets all his obligations and tramples on me—tramples on my feelings—tramples on my bleeding heart. Yes; he inveigles me into a carousal; proposes a game of cards; makes me drink deeply, and drinks deeply himself for that matter; cheats me and wins all my money. Oh! oh! oh!"

"General, oblige me by not weeping. Tears and whisky don't mix!"

"Then when I denounce him," proceeded the General, paying no attention to Morrisson's interruption, "when I complain that he has cheated me, he curses me, calls me a damned drunken fool, and winds up by throwing the pack of cards at my head, and knocking over my tumbler of whisky!"

Morrisson took his feet from the table,

assumed an erect position, folded his arms serenely across his breast, and looked at his *vis-a-vis* with as straight and as sober a look as he could command.

"Yes," whined the General, now worked up to a hysterical condition; "yes, I found a frozen snake—like old Agricola—I picked the reptile up, and fastened it in my bosom—I warmed it into life—and now it strikes its cruel fangs into my heart!"

"Listen to the old hypocrite!" sneered Morrisson.

"I will have vengeance! He thinks I'm a coward; but I'll teach the ingrate a lesson. Vengeance! Vengeance!"

And, with this menacing outburst, General Woodruff filled one of the green tumblers with whisky, tossed it off, and resumed his meditating posture.

Morrisson sat still fully five minutes. Then, lifting his eyes and scrutinizing Woodruff's face, he cocked his feet upon the table again, and broke forth in an indignant strain.

"When I was a boy," said he, "I formed the acquaintance of a young aristocrat who was just commencing life as a lawyer. He was rich, wild, frolicsome, and apparently very generous. I was poor, but ambitious, and was struggling to lift myself from an humble position. The young aristocrat was kind to me, and aided me in numerous and various ways. Through his assistance I got a collegiate education, and was admitted to the bar; through his patronage I secured business, and have been successful. After growing up to manhood I became associated with him constantly, esteemed him, loved him, was grateful to him; and for twenty years I have been worshipping him for his generosity, and proclaiming his praises, and telling the world of my obligations to him for material comfort, when friendly services were most needed. During that twenty years I never suspected him of having been the mere agent of an unknown benefactor, never had the remotest suspicion that he was practicing a deception—But I was being duped all the while—duped—duped!"

"The vile slanderer!" moaned Woodruff.

"This person, this supposed benefactor, was a gentleman in every respect but one—so I thought. His blemish was his fond-

ness for dissipation and his contemptible cowardice while drunk. These were his only faults—the only faults I could see. I never imagined that he was a constitutional liar!"

"The infamous wretch!" sighed the General. "The infamous wretch, to libel his benefactor!"

"Well, this week, for the first time in many months, I met him. I am fond of a glass; he is fond of a dozen glasses. We got drunk together; kept together all the time, and were friendly enough. Then that infernal blunder of a suit was dismissed; he made fun of me; ridiculed my stupidity; capped the climax by boasting of a large fee he had been paid. I bore with him patiently. Afterwards, we came to this room together; he proposed a game of euchre; we played; he got beaten; got mad; charged me with cheating. Still I stood his insulting behavior!"

"The unconscionable liar!" ejaculated General Woodruff, taking another drink.

"I stood that—could have stood more. Then to annoy me he declared his knowledge of a secret of mine; upon being pumped, intimated that I was a bastard; to prove this, told me that he had been acting in James Leigh's behalf while befriending me years ago—confessed himself a contemptible dissembler. I could bear no more; and I threw the cards at his head. —I wish the pack had been made of lead!"

"The savage!" shuddered the General.

"Now that man has threatened me!" continued Morrisson. "I feel that my life is in danger. I shall prepare for him! Let's see—how shall I get him out of my way?"

Pausing a moment, the ex-corporal rose, and assumed the position of a soldier. Then he slowly took out a piece of tobacco, cut off a chew, and put into his mouth. Having seemed to ponder, while going through with this impressive pantomime, he gave Woodruff a penetrating glance, and resumed:

"I am too smart to kill a man myself; but I know a Dutchman, who has murdered six men, eight women, and fourteen babies. He can easily be bribed!"

The General moved uneasily in his seat.

"I'll see him—I'll give him a good round sum of money. I can afford this, as I have won three hundred dollars to-night. He will execute my plan."

Morrisson now lowered his voice.

"Some night, when the man I've got marked, is going from one dram shop to another, top-heavy, but steady in the back step, he will look towards The Meadows, and see the sky lull with flame. He will rush to his buggy; will spring in; he will hasten homewards to the succor of his daughter; he will get in sight of his dwelling; he will hear the piteous series of his child for some one to rescue her from the burning mansion; he will dash towards the house. As he jumps from his buggy, a Dutchman will knock him in the ditch; will cut his throat from ear to ear; will cram him into a bag and throw him into the river. I KNOW HOW TO GET PEOPLE OUT OF MY WAY!"

As Morisson brought out the last sentence his face was black with a menacing scowl.

"Good God, Morisson! You wouldn't do that, would you? Look here! look here! That's too horrible! What's the use of carrying matters so far? Let's be friends! This is disagreeable—extremely disagreeable!" whined Woodruff, thoroughly sobered with fright.

The Judge could keep in no longer, and he fairly shouted. Woodruff did not lack appreciation of the ridiculousness of his position, and, perfectly recovered from the influence of a week's spreeing, he darted from the room.

As the General made his exit, Morisson waved his hand in his loftiest manner, and remarked, with decorous gravity.

"A very affecting scene, Judge!"

CHAPTER XIII.

VERNON was with his regiment in time to participate in the battle of Fredericksburg, which closed the campaign of 1862, and spent the winter quietly, on the banks of the Rappahannock.

In the spring he was with Jackson when Hooker's flank was turned in the Wilderness, and was in the charge which won the heights of Chancellorsville.

Paul Adams recovered from the effects of his wound; and both he and Vernon went to Pennsylvania with Ewell, and were of the brave band that struggled so heroically but unsuccessfully at Gettysburg.

All of the field officers of the "Bloody F—th" were wounded at Chancellorsville, and Vernon commanded the regiment during this campaign.

On the first of July, when this, the grandest and most important battle of the war, commenced, Vernon's regiment was confronted by a brigade from Vermont, which was led by a bold, dashing and reckless officer, who fought his men furiously to repel the impetuous attack of the enthusiastic Carolinian.

Vernon pressed upon this brigade so vigorously, however, that it was hurled back with the loss of its leader, and driven for security to the heights on the other edge of the town—those heights which the next two days were the battle-ground of the most famous contest of the nineteenth century.

While pressing forward after the retreating Vermonters, Vernon was attracted by the cries of their seriously wounded leader, who was left behind to fall into the hands of the victorious Confederates.

Vernon stopped, and rode up to this officer. The officer recognized him as the commander of the troops against whom he had been fighting, and in grappling with whom he had been disabled.

"Colonel," said he, "will you commend me to the attention of your surgeon? My wound is bleeding profusely, and I am growing very faint."

"Certainly, General! Corporal Jacobs, fall out of ranks and go for Doctor Effingham. He is yonder in the edge of the woods. Tell him to come to this officer immediately."

Without waiting longer Vernon cantered on and joined his troops, who were now in full pursuit of the foe.

"Assuredly, I have seen him before—but where?" mused General Carson, looking after the retreating form of Vernon. "Ah!

yes! It must have been at Saratoga! No! I remember now—I saw him on the deck of the Cosmopolitan. The same fellow that proclaimed himself a disunionist!"

While pursuing the fugitive Vermonters, Vernon was struck on the thigh by a fragment of shell, which, while it failed to inflict serious injury, so destroyed his ability to walk or ride, that he was compelled to leave the field and seek surgical aid.

In passing back to the hospital, he again encountered the wounded Federal General, and halted a moment to inquire whether he had received attention.

"I think I have enjoyed the pleasure of meeting you before, General," he remarked, after closely scanning the features of this officer. "You were on a Hudson River steamer in September, 1859, with a Doctor Sangster from New York; and will perhaps remember that your conversation was interrupted by a young fire-eater, who longed for disunion?"

"Distinctly, sir; and I recognize you as that young fire-eater!"

"Well, sir, you see what your party has brought upon the country. The agricultural South asserts its independence; the commercial North loses its best customers!" said Vernon, recurring to the subject of the conversation to which he alluded.

"Provided you succeed!" retorted Gen. Carson. "But you will not—you will be overwhelmed!"

"What! When we are strong enough to invade one of your most populous States, and have the ability to whip your best army on your own soil! See! Look where your comrades fly in consternation!"

"WAIT UNTIL TO-MORROW!"

"To-morrow we will commence the march that is to give us Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia! To-morrow there will be a quaking—a panic—a revolution in New York!"

"And are you so blind as to hope to conquer the great North?"

"No; not to conquer—we do not desire that! But to establish our independence? YES—A THOUSAND TIMES, YES!"

"Young man, it is impossible! The Almighty has made this vast country for the home of a single nation. Between the two Oceans, and the Gulf and the Lakes, two

governments cannot exist. Ours is one country, one people, one nationality, perpetually inseparable!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Carolinian, proceeding immediately to controvert this absurd proposition. "The wide extent of territory within those boundaries, necessarily produces a great variety of climate; the climatic influences, affecting the people and the productions of the sections which natural laws have defined, evoke an antagonism of interests which develops an antipathy between the inhabitants of the North, East, West, and South; this, in turn, disturbs the harmony and destroys the inter-confidence upon which all Republics must depend for existence. Before the war, a common origin united the people of the different States in a sentiment of friendship, which modified the natural instinct of selfishness that ordinarily controls human action. But this social impulse must be short-lived. An influx of foreign population is fostering the growth of antagonism that will eventually necessitate disintegration. Add to this cause the passion of party that has been aroused by the war, not only in the South, but in the North, where the greatest individual oppression has been experienced by those who have dared to differ in sentiment with the present administration, and it may be readily foreseen that the United States will be ultimately subdivided, whether the South succeeds or fails."

"A very philosophical, and a very ridiculous argument! But, suppose it were well founded, would natural causes, evoking a tendency to disruption, be powerful enough in their operation, to overcome the centralizing force of the bayonet?"

"The sword is a powerful cohibitor; and, perhaps, it may be able to arrest the march of Nature's army of events. But only for a moment! You forget, however, that you must triumph in the gigantic undertaking in which your government is now engaged, before your sword can be made a terror to new malcontents!"

"But we will triumph! I am sublimely certain of the result! Beat us to-day, destroy our army; a month hence we will meet you better prepared than ever to make the conquest sure! The North grows more

powerful with each successive reverse that befalls its armies : the South grows weaker with its every victory ! ”

Vernon was struck with the pertinency of this reply, and forebore further argument. The General was asserting a very unpleasant fact that Vernon did not care to commune with too familiarly. He feared his faith would receive a shock ; he feared that he might become a Croaker.

“ Perhaps, Colonel,”—General Carson, not knowing Vernon’s rank or name, continued to address him as Colonel, having seen him in command of a regiment—“ perhaps, as you are a North Carolinian, you know a Lieutenant Wright, who was Adjutant of the F——th North Carolina Troops ! ”

“ I do—I do ! ” cried Roland in an excited tone, overcome with the contending emotions of hope and fear, which the question aroused. “ I do ! What of him ? Is he alive ? Is he well ? Tell me ! Quick ! quick ! ”

“ He is alive, and is well ! ” responded the General. “ Do you know a Col. Ashe, or a Captain Vernon ? ” he continued.

“ Yes ! both ! I am Captain Vernon ! But why ? a message ? a letter ? ” eagerly inquired Roland.

“ Then if you are Captain Vernon, this letter is for you. It will be needless for me to employ a flag of truce for its transmission, as I am your prisoner ! ”

Vernon broke the seal, and with eager eyes devoured the pages written in the well known hand of Wright.

“ I found him on the field of Williamsburg frightfully wounded,” explained the Federal ; “ got him sent to Fortress Monroe, where he has remained in the hospital ever since. A foolish attempt to escape has precluded him from the enjoyment of the usual mail privilege, and prevented him from communicating with his friends. I saw him several weeks ago and he persuaded me to undertake the transmission of this letter, which, until now, I have neglected for want of an opportunity. I am glad to have it reach its proper destination.”

Vernon expressed his thanks in a very cordial manner, and taking Carson’s address agreed to see him again, suggesting that it might be in his power to serve a good turn in recognition of this favor.

Vernon then passed on to the Hospital, and requested Doctor Effingham to have General Carson removed to some place of shelter where his wound could be treated with greater care.

The morrow to which the Federal General appealed came, and then another morrow, during both of which days the fighting continued. Vernon went back to his command on the morning of the second day’s battle, and was in the desperate assault of the afternoon of the third of July.

As the Carolinian had predicted, there was quaking and a panic in New York ; but there was no revolution. On the contrary, the fright and gloom were quickly converted into gladness and rejoicing.

The sublime certainty of the captive was justified !

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Lee resolved to retreat from Pennsylvania, Vernon’s regiment, together with the rest of the brigade to which he was attached, was detailed as a guard for the wagon-trains of Ewell’s Corps.

Escorting these trains, without adventure, to within five miles of Hagerstown, the feeling of perfect security which had been entertained up to this time was dispelled by a heavy cannonading in the direction of Williamsport, and as the column moved on in its march, this firing approached nearer and nearer, until, at length, it became so close that the trains were halted and the troops were pressed forward to a point about one mile from Hagerstown on the Waynesboro road, at which place they were thrown into battle line.

From this line the Federal cavalry could be distinctly seen, fighting with a handful of Confederates in the town.

The brigade, which had so often changed commanders, was under General J—— ; and he made every preparation for an attack and waited for the enemy to advance. In all the regiments there were only two

field officers present, so heavily had this command lost in the battle of Gettysburg.

In the perfection of his plan of defence, General J—— detached Lieutenant-Colonel D——, with two companies to guard a road on the right, and Major A——, with two companies, to guard another road on the left, himself retaining command of the main force. Next to himself, Captain Vernon was the senior officer on the ground.

Captain Vernon's regiment was on the right of the line and rested on the turnpike by which the column had reached Hagers-town.

General J—— had scarcely completed the disposition of his force, when a brigade of cavalry assaulted his line, and seriously menaced the safety of his charge; but, fighting stubbornly, he repelled this attack. A squadron belonging to a Federal regiment from West Virginia succeeded, however, in cutting its way through Vernon's centre.

As they dashed up the road and approached his position, Vernon gave them a volley at fifty yards; and, hastily ordering his men to reload, he waited until they flew past him at a rapid pace, when before they could sweep round to charge him in rear, he brought his regiment to an about face, and with a sure aim delivered an effective fire, emptying nearly every saddle.

This was a decided success; but it cost dearly. General J—— was seriously and dangerously wounded, and forced to go back to the trains.

Now every indication threatened a renewal of the attack. Swarming squadrons were galloping into line, and confronting the devoted little band whose command, by a most unusual accident of war, was devolved upon Captain Vernon.

The young officer did not falter a moment. Leaving the "Bloody F——th" in charge of its senior officer, he sprang upon one of the horses which his men had captured, his own having been shot under him at Gettysburg, and galloped from regiment to regiment, issuing instructions to his subordinates with great calmness, and inspiring the men with courage by his exhortations.

"There's no chance for life except in fighting. We must drive them back or

die in our tracks. If you will sustain me, I can whip twice their number. It's Infantry against Cavalry! Who can doubt the result?"

Talking thus, impressing every soldier with his own determined valor, his example was worth a brigade of veterans.

Ten regiments of U. S. Cavalry now formed in the fields in Vernon's front. He instantly divined their intention, and nerved himself for the struggle.

His position was a very trying one—very embarrassing. This was his first battle while in supreme command. He was without artillery, while the enemy had placed three field batteries in position to play upon his line. If defeated all of the baggage and all of the wounded men of the Corps would fall into the hands of the Federals.

But Captain Vernon fortified himself with patience and waited fearlessly.

The Federal bugles sounded. The horsemen moved forward at a trot. They came within musket range. They dashed ahead at a furious pace with their sabres flashing above their heads.

On they swept. Within two hundred yards. Within one hundred and fifty yards. Within seventy-five yards. Vernon did not discharge a gun.

On they swept. Within thirty yards. In a second's ride of Vernon's line.

"FIRE!"

The word of command rang along the Confederate line. A sheet of flame flashed; a terrific roar rose; a wild cheer resounded.

The charging squadrons held up. Riderless horses rushed frantically along to the rear. The whole Federal line broke. Officers called back their men. The bugle pealed its rallying signal. They re-formed and prepared for another dash.

The buglers put their pieces to their lips. Men rose up in their stirrups, and clutched their sabre hilts more firmly. Then the first note of the charge was sounded.

HARK!

A Confederate yell! The booming of Confederate cannon! JEB STUART'S LONG BLACK PLUME! THE CLATTER OF MANY HOOFS!

Two brigades of Confederate Cavalry came plunging behind the great Raider.

Two more came plunging behind Fitz Lee. One brigade of Mounted Infantry followed Jenkins' lead.

Stuart paused. He waved his hat above his head. He gave an exultant cry.

"WE'VE SURROUNDED THEM!—CHARGE!" Consternation was depicted in the features of every Federal's face.

"*Attention!* FORWARD MARCH!—CHARGE!" shouted Vernon, echoing Stuart's command.

In serried ranks the Infantry pressed forward, as if charging a battery instead of advancing against a division of Cavalry. In a moment, Vernon's men were upon the enemy; and, after delivering one tremendous volley, clashed their bayonets with the foemen's sabres.

Ah! It was a spectacle to behold—a sublime spectacle for a second!

Then Stuart's sabres joined Vernon's bayonets. Then the work was done.

"Whose brigade?" shouted Stuart.

"General J——'s," replied Vernon.

"Where is the General?"

"Badly wounded, sir."

"Where?"

"Back at the trains."

"Who is in command here?"

A ludicrous figure the brigade commander cut: A badly used wool hat, bound with a red cord and tassel, very much soiled, sat on a head that was covered with bloused golden hair, knotted and uncombed, its flapping brim shading an eye that glared like an enraged tiger's and lit up a face, covered with a scraggy, dirty, brownish beard, that hid every feature but a magnificently chiselled nose. A long grey coat, unbuttoned, worn out at the elbows, and without ornament or insignia of rank, dropped its tails on either side of a spavined sorrel pony, that crouched rather than stood between a pair of legs clothed with a very short pair of woolsey pants, out of the extremities of which a pair of stockingless shanks protruded, and, merging into feet, crept into a pair of low quartered shoes the toes of which stuck in a pair of wooden stirrups that were suspended by a couple of leather thongs from the sides of a badly abused Mexican saddle.

"Who is in command here?" repeated General J. E. B. Stuart.

"I am, sir!" replied the object just described.

The great Cavalryman bestrode a magnificent charger, with as lordly an air as a king ever bore. He was uniformed in a splendidly decorated Major General's suit, and seemed to have just bounced from a bandbox. When Vernon spoke, staring impudently until he had taken in every detail of the picture, Stuart burst into a horse laugh that could have been heard a mile, and exclaimed,

"The devil you are! Where in the deuce did you come from?"

"General Stuart," quickly responded Vernon, "I am not in the habit of letting indignity go unresented! You take advantage of your rank to be insulting—it shall not shield you, sir!"

Stuart liked the bold flash of that angry eye, and was struck with the appearance of the firm lip, compressed with indignant resolve. He instinctively felt that he was confronting a gentleman.

"My dear sir, I really intended no offense—but—but I could not desist. You have no idea—it is utterly impossible that you should have—what an infernally funny sight you are. You'll excuse me, I know? Please give me your name and rank?"

Vernon complied with the General's request.

"Well, Captain," continued Stuart, "all I have to say is this—you command a curious sort of infantry. I never saw bayonets clash sabres before. That charge was superb—grand! Look out for my congratulatory order—your name shall appear! Good-bye, Captain."

And he rode away whistling "Jine the Cavalry."

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE Paul Adams was a very lucky soldier, he was not without very decided ability. Chance originally gave him position; craftiness, energy and pluck, secured

him rapid promotion, grade after grade, until he became a Colonel; while well directed newspaper puffs, not wholly unmerited, although written by himself, obtained him an excellent reputation in each office that he attained.

Roland Vernon was worthier of advancement, and, had his capacity been published, as Adams' was, he would have achieved distinction as an officer. But he scorned to employ the arts which he knew his rival habitually resorted to for the furtherance of his own selfish aspirations.

After serving in the Gettysburg campaign, Adams became tired of the field; and, through the influence of Mr. Morrison, who was elected to Congress in the fall of 1863, he obtained a transfer to the General Staff of the Army. Subsequently, he was assigned to post duty in North Carolina.

In his new position, Adams was vested with great power, and found many opportunities, and enjoyed advantages, for conducting a series of successful speculations. In these he was fortunate enough to reap such profits, that although his capital was very small at the outset, he rapidly acquired a very handsome little fortune.

Adams was always a keen, sharp-sighted, forecasting business man. He never allowed sentiment to conflict with interest, and kept his judgment clear of all the confusion which enthusiasm or prejudice produces. So it was, that he could penetrate as far into the future as most of mankind.

After the Confederate reverses at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, it was apparent to his disciplined intellect that the chances of ultimate success in the attempt to establish a separate national existence for the South were greatly diminished; and, while he was too wise to bring himself into disrepute by running counter to the current of popular opinion by expressing the doubts which he entertained, he acted upon them continually, and, suffering the heavy discounts required, converted his gains into gold, and other valuables, as fast as they were amassed.

Demoralized by the depraving influences of that social disorganization evoked by the War, and surrendering to the instigations of the insatiable avarice which now possessed his soul, the better nature of this

man, if he ever had any redeeming traits of character, was vitiated; and he plunged recklessly into the vortex of that anarchical life, which in the latter months of the War eviscerated so many much nobler spirits of their virtue, honor, manliness, and regard for duty. Naturally inclined to selfishness, constrained as he was by the inherited and unconquerable vices which descended from his progenitors, brutal and treacherous in his instincts, he became a cunningly disguised Ishmaelite—making his neighbors and acquaintances the readier victims of his subtle arts, by striking deadly but covert blows, while scheming most assiduously to retain their confidence.

Worse than all this, he treated his wife with great inhumanity, and conceived an intense hatred for his children. He was violent in his home; mean; and grudgingly provided his family with the necessities for a wretched support.

Dolores bore all this with more than a wife's patience—bore it until her breaking heart could tolerate no longer. Her condition became at last so entirely unendurable that she resolved to avoid the constant abuse and maltreatment to which she was subjected.

In this frame of mind she pondered for months on the subject, endeavoring to determine upon the course which would at once secure escape, and occasion the least acrimonious comment. Once or twice she thought of advising with Alice, but when she thoroughly considered this step, she revolted from communicating family secrets even to so dear and trustworthy a friend. Then came a repetition of violence to precipitate a conclusion, and the execution of her purpose. She decided upon a plan which she thought would accomplish her design with greatest certainty and with least discredit to herself.

But Dolores needed money to succeed in this undertaking.

She called on Alice; told her that she was in need of a sum of money to carry out a scheme upon which she had determined; asked the loan of the amount. Alice signified her willingness to oblige; regretted that she hadn't the money; would write to her husband for it, and be delighted to accommodate her. Dolores preferred

not to have Vernon know that she had made such an application. What would he think of her coming to him with such a request, and so forth? Alice would obviate all unpleasantness by asking for the money as if wanted for her own use. Dolores was all gratitude.

A week passed; ten days passed; two weeks passed: Then came a letter from Roland. The letter was opened, and there was a check. Of course Alice could be spared that much and ten times more if she wanted it; and she ought to be ashamed to doubt it!

Alice was flattered by Roland's confidence, delighted by his generosity, pleased at his rebuke. Besides, she was rejoiced on her friend's account, and very curious; so she sent for her.

Dolores responded to this call.

Alice gave her the money—a small sum; only a hundred and fifty dollars *in gold*.

Dolores expressed her thanks warmly.

Alice was quite sure she was as much gratified in lending.

But how her curiosity annoyed her! It was horrible! What on earth could Dolores want with the money?

Dolores was not communicative.

Alice wouldn't ask her right plump; but she would find out. She would keep her eyes open. Trust her for that!

Dolores returned home.

Alice's curiosity became wrought up to a high pitch. Why didn't Dolores get the money from Paul? He's rich now, they say! But nothing occurred to satisfy her excited mind—nothing for two or three days.

Then early one morning she heard a piece of news.

DOLORES, HER CHILDREN, MRS. VAUGHN, WERE GONE—FLED FROM PAUL ADAMS' HOUSE!

Alice regretted, but did not uncharitably condemn the step! She *knew* Paul Adams; knew what Dolores had suffered; knew the cause of the flight.

The gossips traduced Dolores, of course; shook their heads wisely and intimated that, for a married woman, she was always too fond of attention from other gentlemen than her husband; and—waited for the

next seven days' wonder to chatter about with one another.

Dolores left two powerful friends behind: Alice defended her to the last; and her mother-in-law, Mrs. Col. Vernon, convinced by her confidence, soon became an ally in protecting the fair name of the fugitive.

Where and why had she gone?

The question remained unanswered for months—unanswerable by all save Paul Adams. He knew, but pretended ignorance.

CHAPTER XVI.

DURING the first two years of the war, Col. Vernon was in Congress; but, in the latter part of 1863, the President called him to a more important station, which he reluctantly accepted.

It was fortunate for Roland that his father enjoyed the influence which his office conferred; for, as soon as he got back from Pennsylvania, he applied to secure a special exchange of General Carson for Jock Wright and any two other subalterns. After encountering several obstacles and surmounting them, Col. Vernon succeeded in obtaining the desired favor for his son, and effected the exchange.

As Col. Ashe threatened to do, he resigned as soon as he reached Virginia; but he was prevailed upon to remain in the service with a Brigadier-General's commission. By the promotion of Col. Ashe, Roland went up to the majority of the "Bloody F—th."

And so matters stood in the fall of 1863. Then came the campaign that ended at Mine Run. Then followed a long rest. Then the spring campaign of 1864.

While leading his men in a desperate charge Roland Vernon was dangerously wounded at Spottsylvania. From the battle-field he was carried to the hospital of the Second Corps, in which he was subsequently captured, paroled, and then lay vibrating between life and death for two months. This hospital was uncovered by Lee when he moved to the Northanna; and

but, although inside the Federal lines, its inmates were most of the time free from molestation.

About day-break one morning, after he had been in this place for several weeks, however, Roland, other inmates, attendants, and medical officers, were startled by the sound of guns in the direction of Louisa Court-House; and all of them became restless and fearful that they would be disturbed by the combatants, as the firing gradually advanced towards them during the day, and ceased about night, seemingly not many miles distant.

This apprehension was not groundless. The next morning about nine o'clock a loud clattering of hoofs heralded the approach of a large body of cavalymen, who from the peculiarity of their cheers were known to be Federals; and, a few minutes later, with sabres drawn, yelling like a pack of demons, as they were, they dashed into the hospital encampment, and captured several hundred men, all of them so seriously wounded as to be unable to undergo removal.

Darting from tent to tent, these human fiends sported with the agonies of the suffering captives. Tiring, at last, of this amusement, they revelled for several hours in destroying the supplies left for the subsistence of their wounded victims.

Brutal miscreants!

Vernon was unable to move on his rude bed; but he watched them with a horrible hate and an ungovernable fury as they exulted over his unfortunate comrades with a diabolical malignity. Then, growing desperate, he felt under his head for his repeater.

He was not long without intrusion himself. A foppish Assistant Surgeon soon entered his tent, followed by an insulting crowd of privates and a few officers, others gathering outside and peeping through the hoisted sides of the marquee to enjoy the sufferings which they expected to see inflicted.

"And who are you?" inquired the gentleman of the Medical Staff.

"A paroled prisoner!" replied the Major, exhibiting a certificate of the fact which he stated.

"Ah! From North Carolina!" exclaimed

the popinjay Doctor. "That is the most loyal to the Union of all the Southern States. I am glad to meet a North Carolinian!"

"I can't reciprocate the feeling, sir!" replied the Confederate. "Besides, sir, you slander my State!"

"A regular secesh!" cried an outsider.

"Young man," continued the man of the lance, "I don't understand your remark. Slander!"

"Yes; you breathe a calumny against my State. You have been reading extracts from the *Richmond Examiner*, and have adopted the foul aspersions of Pollard for truth."

"Why, you don't deny that your people are for the Union and against rebellion?" responded the astonished Surgeon.

"Sir," said Vernon, raising himself on his elbow, and angered by the impertinence and presence of the Yankee, "the blood, the brains, the wealth, the valor, the manhood of North Carolina are all enlisted in the cause of the South! Only a few Quakers, disappointed politicians, and paupers are for your accursed Union!—But you annoy me—you irritate me—leave my tent! Damn it, I can't breathe freely in the atmosphere that you inhale!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the tormentors.

"I want to examine your wound!" proceeded the Doctor.

"You shall not do it—I have been paroled!"

"'Shall not' is a strong expression; but 'will' is a stronger—and I will examine it!"

"Do you intend to violate my rights as a paroled prisoner?" asked Vernon sharply, feeling under his head again.

"I must obey my orders; and they require me to make the examination," was the relenting explanation.

"Be quick, then; and do your duty."

The Surgeon drew up the coarse sheet; unbandaged the swollen limb, and looked at it a moment in amazement.

"My God, what a wound!" he at last ejaculated. "Minie ball passed almost directly through the right ankle-joint, entering at the internal malleolus, fracturing the tibia, and issuing from the tendo Achil-

lis. Why didn't your surgeons amputate?"

"Because I refused to permit them!"

"But, Major," persuaded the Doctor, merging the patriotic tormentor into the Surgeon and humanitarian, "unless your foot is amputated, you will certainly die. Why, you have erysipelas now!"

"So I have been informed!" quietly observed Vernon.

"This will never do: I will operate! Jones, go and request Doctor Scalpel to bring his chloroform and amputating case to this tent."

Vernon waited calmly. He had passed through the same ordeal before, and had conquered.

As he saw the other Surgeon approaching with a mahogany box under his arm, followed by Jones, who was bringing a large bottle containing the anæsthetic, he grasped the handle of his pistol and resolved to make his last fight, and die game, or carry his point.

"Doctor, you can't amputate my foot!" This was said with a forced self-control; and Vernon looked the man of the knife boldly in the eye and compressed his lips firmly.

"I must! Humanity demands that I shall!"

"Humanity be damned!" echoed Vernon.

By this time, the Doctor had finished his preparations; and was about to have Vernon removed from the bed to an extemporized operating table.

"When I was paroled," said Vernon, as the Doctor came forward with the chloroform, "I gave my word that I would not take arms against your government until exchanged. But I did not promise not to resist assassination—I did not relinquish the natural right of self-preservation."

Then Vernon drew out his weapon, and levelled it at the head of the frightened sawbones.

"Now, if you don't desist, I'll put you to death, BY GOD! YOU DAMNED HELLIONS! I'LL MAKE A CORPSE OF THE FIRST WHO ADVANCES!"

As the Confederate glared like a maniac at the astonished group of Federals, there was a sublime tableau.

Scalpel trembled and then shouted:

"SEIZE HIM!"

Vernon changed his aim to Scalpel. Then his finger pulled at the trigger. Then both Doctors ducked their heads. Then, an explosion!

Nobody was hurt; a hand from behind struck up the muzzle.

Click!!! Click!!! Click!!!

Three revolvers were presented at the Carolinian's breast.

Click! Click! Click!

The paroled prisoner had re-cocked his repeater.

"SURRENDER YOUR ARMS, OR WE'LL SHOOT!"

Rising in his bed by a superhuman effort—his face black with defiant scorn—Vernon spurned them with horrible invective.

"SURRENDER, OR WE'LL FIRE!"

"FIRE! YE DAMNED COWARDS!"

The valiant three were about to execute their menace, and had aimed their revolvers at the head of the prostrate officer.

"Back, you devils! Away with you—the whole batch!" shouted an authoritative voice, just in time to save Vernon's life.

Leaping, with long and rapid strides, two Federal officers, one in a General's, the other in a Surgeon's uniform, rushed towards the tent. As they entered the wolfish pack scattered.

"Why Vernon!" exclaimed General Carson. "I am sorry to see you here; and so badly wounded!"

"Thank you, General—thank you!" was the grateful response. And Roland seized the hand of his preserver.

"Here is an old acquaintance—Doctor Sangster, Captain Vernon!"

"Ah! I remember! I'm deligh——."

Vernon fell back in a swoon, overcome with excitement, and exhausted by his exertion. He was delirious for a week.

CHAPTER XVII.

"You here, Doctor?—and the others gone!" Waking from a heavy sleep, free

from delirium, and encountering the anxious gaze of Sangster, Vernon uttered this ejaculation.

"I am here, my young friend—and, like you, a paroled prisoner."

"How? When and where were you captured? Who's here that can make a capture? I thought everybody was paroled!"

"No. Since Genl. Carson's force left a small guard has come down from Gordonsville. I was taken by it."

"How did that happen?"

"When Genl. Carson's command retired from here a week ago, I went with it; but the brigade rested for the night about five miles off. When I woke next morning I found the others gone; and, upon getting up to go after them, I saw a couple of Confederates approaching. They were a part of the guard from Gordonsville; and, seeing me, demanded my surrender. I complied; was brought here; paroled; and now have the freedom of the hospital."

"I regret your mishap, Doctor; but hope your captivity will not be unpleasant."

"I hope so. I have examined your wound and feel an interest in your case. It is a remarkable one, and I am surprised that you have not died."

"So everyone seems to think. By the bye, I owe you and General Carson my gratitude for your timely rescue. But for your opportune appearance I would have been butchered."

"Our arrival was fortunate: The brigade came on ahead of the General and myself, else the ruthless behavior of the troops would not have been permitted. As soon as Carson reached the encampment he saw that the mischief was to pay, and hurried to the relief of the inmates of the hospital. Your tent attracted his notice, because there was a large crowd around it, and he came here first. He was pleasantly surprised to find that in performing a duty, he was protecting an old friend."

"I regret that I was so soon overpowered by the excitement that I could not make a fuller recognition of his service. You say you have examined my wound—will I recover?"

"Assuredly! Since I persuaded your surgeons to try the Pennsylvania fracture-box, and the application of bran, the in-

flammation has entirely subsided. You will soon be well, if you will keep quiet."

"Then I must have some diversion. Have you any books?"

"No. That is to say, nothing but Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, which is rather heavy reading for a sick couch."

"Oh, anything will do! Are you through with it?"

"Yes. I have just finished it, and will bring it."

Doctor Sangster went for the book; and, returning with it, he remarked, as he gave it to Vernon,

"This is a sequel to Draper's *Physiology*—an able and interesting work; and written, as that was, in advocacy of the "Development Theory of Creation."

"Then it belongs to the series of which the *Vestiges of Creation* is the introduction. I have not kept posted in the literary gossip of the age, but from internal evidence I should attribute the "Vestiges" to the pen of Draper."

"Crosse has been suspected of the authorship!" observed the Doctor.

"But the suspicion must be incorrect. Crosse is referred to in terms of compliment in the work. Besides, if Draper is not the author he is a plagiarist—he has borrowed many of the ideas of the "Vestiges."

"I think you do him injustice. La Place is the founder of the Theory—his *Nebular Hypothesis* is at the base of the whole fabric. The author of the "Vestiges," and the author of the "Physiology," merely develop his idea. Buckle does the same thing in another direction. None of them are plagiarists, however; in this, that each is original in his manner of pursuing the theory, and in extending its application, by reasoning, from its premises."

"Yet all of them speculate on a borrowed capital. All are but walking in the path cut out by the genius of the great thinker who first conceived the fundamental thought of the theory."

"Very true! Still Buckle, Draper, Crosse, many others, have contributed by their speculations on this subject, to the scientific thesaurus of the century. In the work which I have just brought you, Draper carries forward the argument which he com-

menced in the "Physiology," and applies the doctrine of Development to the life of Nations as well as to the life of the segregate Man, and to the Cosmogony of the Universe. But read it—I will not anticipate!"

With this remark the Doctor left his friend. Vernon followed the argument of the distinguished Physicist; and found, as he proceeded in the discussion of the great subject, that Draper's ably supported Materialism, accorded with the creed of Philosophy which his own speculations inclined him to hold as the true Cosmology. What he, himself, had thought and expressed, in an inchoate manner, was set forth, in the lucid work of Doctor Draper, with graphic power. He was charmed with the greatness, but disappointed at the moral cowardice of the author.

"And how do you like Draper?" inquired Doctor Sangster, a couple of weeks later, entering Vernon's tent, and finding him engaged in the perusal of the closing chapters of the book. "He lends to the abstruse subject which he discusses a clearness of dissertation, and floods upon it a light of entertaining information that renders the work a most delightfully charming and readable book to scholars of every profession."

"Yes;" replied Vernon; "but it does not satisfy me—it is illogical!"

"True!" quickly responded Sangster. "The utter rejection of the Mosaic account of Creation, and the ridicule of the early Christian Church, with the facts presented for the fortification of his positions, are feebly sustained assaults against the truth of History!"

"There I disagree with you. I think, in the *rolé* of an iconoclast, Doctor Draper has succeeded admirably. I find no-fault with his propositions, proofs, or conclusions, as far as he goes in that direction. Indeed, in support of his criticisms of the Mosaic Cosmology, as well as in defence of his merciless ridicule of the annals and traditions of the Church, he has presented an invulnerable array of facts.

"How, then, is he illogical?"

"Why, when he has smashed the idol of Christianity into flinders, he carefully collects the fragments of the image which

he has destroyed, and, urged by a fear of denunciation from the world, endeavors to refit the pieces, and flimsily coheres them into a very defective representation of the shattered bauble: when he has toppled over the superstructure of superstition, he gathers up the scattered materials—the stone, the plank—and with them essays to erect a new edifice, without the strength, but of the same proportions and exterior, as the one that he has demolished. Now, if the Nebular Hypothesis be fit to found a theory upon, that theory ought to be developed to its utmost logical conclusion, no matter what preconceived notions in physics or religion are brought into conflict with it; and the true philosophy should stand, the false fall. Draper has not dared to do this: he has shirked: he is afraid to publish what he believes; he holds too respectable a position in the estimation of the Churchmen to proclaim himself an infidel; he resorts to literary agility to escape odium. But Draper's failure to be logical does not disprove the correctness of his premises."

"Why, Major, are you a convert to Materialism? Are you an atheist?"

"Not precisely! I do not know what classification is suited to persons of my creed!"

Answering the interrupting inquiry with this abrupt reply, Vernon continued, blurring out his views with a volubility and emphasis that astonished the Doctor:

"Draper," he proceeded, "is a forcible advocate of Materialism, but a poor Physico-Theologist. He has intellect without courage; knows how to search for and find the truth, but will not proclaim it when found. He does not love the Right or hate the Wrong, else he would laugh at the denunciations of the rabble and condemn the invectives of society."

"Why don't you declare your belief publicly? You ask Draper to do what you are unwilling to do yourself."

"He professes to teach; I am merely an inquirer. Consequently there is no obligation resting on me to declare my opinions. Still if I had any fixed faith, I would not hesitate. But I am in doubt as to the truth. Draper defends a theory; and, therefore, he is convinced of its correctness!"

"Then you do not agree with the believers in the Development Doctrine?"

"I am not convinced. Still I cannot deny that I incline to the adoption of the cosmological, physiological, and metaphysical teachings of that school."

"You amaze me! Of all my acquaintances, I should have expected you to be a strong Churchman, you are so radically conservative in your Sociology and Politics!"

"Because of my certainty of the incapacity of uneducated and unpurified masses to govern themselves; because I am an aristocrat in my social feelings; because I am opposed to mob rule in government and in the circle of my acquaintance; I am none the less an ardent, devoted, zealous, worshiper of liberty. But I want order first, freedom afterwards. The sceptre of Great Britain, with the security and protection of stable and rigid law, for me, before the reckless Republicanism and Agrarianism of the American Mobocracy."

"So I have understood you to say on several occasions—but I think there is a conflict between your views."

"Not so! While I am for stability and order in government and in society, I am a free-thinker. Freedom of thought never corrupts; excessive liberty of action always brings anarchy and ruin."

"But, Vernon, suppose you should remove the restraints which Religious Faith imposes on the world; suppose you should uproot Christianity, the system which has best subserved the end of keeping individuals in a state of subjection to authority, where would government and where would society drift? What sort of morality would remain?"

"Ah! but I would do nothing of the kind. I would keep the Populace in their state of dependence on the enlightened few. To that few I would give the utmost license of speculation!"

"You would establish an aristocratical despotism of intellect! You would reduce the millions to the unfeeling domination of a class that would despise them!"

"Admit it! Even then that domination would foster a more general happiness than the world can now boast. The truly enlightened are elevated in feeling; the elevated are ever generous."

"But how would you educate the leaders to the high degree of perfection which your conception demands?"

"'Aye! there's the rub!' It cannot be done! Therefore, I endure! Endurance, after all, is the only achiever of Good: Endurance of your Individual Lot—Endurance of the conditions which surround you in Religion, in Society, in Government."

"Then why do you assail Christianity?"

"I do not assail it! You make a common mistake in supposing that a lack of faith produces a disposition to attack—a mistake which grows out of the Christian custom of believing and then endeavoring to force everybody else to believe, whether they can or not, whether their reason approves or disapproves; and, if they will not, of denouncing, proscribing and persecuting them into hypocrisy. The Church says the Bible is true, and proves the assertion by quoting the Bible. The Clergy denounce when they cannot argue. But the world calls for proofs; and, if Christian ministers do not drop invective and prepare themselves to use the weapons of Reason, they will very soon find, if they are right, that their ignorance and perverseness will have peopled hell with Infidels. But, as I said, I do not assail Christianity. I respect the institution as an instrumentality, imperfect and uninspired, of much benevolence, and esteem it as a Conservator of morals and society."

"Why don't you endure the condition of society that environs you?"

"I do! But I seek to elevate its tone, and to give it an exclusiveness that will be a protection against the Pariahs, who besiege its citadels."

"And why don't you endure the system of government against which you are fighting?"

"I do not fight against the system; but for its undefiled perpetuation! I fight for the same Constitution that your armies pretend to be upholding; but I construe its provisions differently from the people of your section!"

"And, I am happy to add, you are fighting under a false impression, and are expending your valor in vain!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Confederate.

There was something in Roland Vernon's laugh that startled Doctor Sangster. He looked at the sick man a moment and then turned despondently away.

"Too much morphine!" he muttered as he left. "It's unbalancing his intellect!"

Doctor Sangster was a Psychiatrist, and he feared that the wild theories of his patient, and the glittering eye with which their utterance was emphasized, were indicia of incipient insanity.

In the course of several weeks the physician had the pleasure of seeing Vernon depart for home, and he was pleased to believe that his fears for him were unfounded, and that there was no need of apprehension that Vernon would suffer from the dreaded cerebro-psychical disorder, whose visitation had been fully expected.

"I little anticipated the circumstance that has thrown us together, Major Vernon," said the Doctor when Roland was about leaving the hospital, "when we met several years ago on the deck of the *Cosmopolitan*; but, for myself, I can say sincerely, that the meeting though unexpected has been a pleasant one. Though Enemies in War, I hope that we may ere long prove very good Friends in Peace."

"Thank you, Doctor! I heartily reciprocate your kindly-expressed wish. And now, in bidding you good bye, let me return my thanks for your kindnesses. They shall not go unrequited."

Then the Federal Surgeon and the "Rebel" Major shook hands and parted.

Vernon did not forget his promise. In three weeks Sangster's kindness was requited by an exchange.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Now Vernon was at home, and there was rejoicing at the Cottage and at Rushbrook. The sword of the warrior was hung on the wall, and the stern alarm of the battlefield smote his ear no more. In place of the trusty blade he had so long wielded in the consciousness of a splendid bravery, the

cripple now carried the supporting crutch. In ears that had so frequently tingled with the whistling of bullets and the shout of the charge, the voices of love and the sounds of domestic harmony now murmured a musical lullaby.

He fled the village, taking Alice with him to Rushbrook. Here he lived again the happy days of his boyhood. The winds that swept through the tops of the trees in the park, in which he had played so often years ago, seemed to carol, all through the months of recreation, which were now vouchsafed after years of peril and privation, the peaceful song of the Lady of the Lake:

"Soldier rest! Thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more;
Days of danger, nights of waking."

And what a season of delight Roland Vernon enjoyed here; surrounded with the recollections of his childhood; living in the old homestead about which so many thousand sweet associations clustered; petted by the mother whose fondness had caressed and whose counsels had encouraged him through the weary hours of petty struggle and boyish despondency; communing with the wisdom of his father, and learning to love and appreciate him more as he grew older; joined in all his moods of gayety or sorrow, romance or studiousness, benevolence or patriotism, by the affectionate sympathy of the darling of his soul—the precious wife whose love made Earth appear to him a blessed Elysium.

In subsequent times—times of depression, darkness, trouble, sorrowing, appalling distress—times when existence became an intolerable burden; when annihilation of the body, aye! and of the soul too, would have been an ineffable tenderness of mercy; how frequently he reverted to these moments of exquisite joy, with a sad longing for what could never be—the restitution of the murdered happiness of the past! How often his sickened heart, wailing with the misery of intense agony, re-echoed the pathetic accents of a deferred hope—nay, a crushed, blighted, dead hope!—as syllabled in the melancholy song of poor Tom Hood—

"I remember, I remember, the house where I was
born,
And the little window where the sun came peeping in
at morn;
It never came a wink too soon, nor brought too long a
day;
But now I often wish the winds had borne my breath
away!"

Alas! alas! Happiness is an ephemeral flower; it blooms on its stem to-day; and the air is laden with the sweetness of its odors—its leaves fall upon the ground at night; and on the morrow its loveliness, its perfumes, are gone!

Vernon was soon ruthlessly separated from his wife and child, and hurried away from them to perform his last patriotic act of self-sacrifice for the cause which he loved. The arch fiend Sherman, rivaling the barbaric hordes that sacked Italy, was sweeping with his Vandals towards C—town, and with a mercilessly inhuman malignity bringing destruction and devastation, torch and rope, as his cherished instruments of conquest.

When Sherman came, although Roland Vernon was still disabled for active service, he felt that he would be guilty of deserting his country if he remained in C—town.

Yet if he stood by his colors and went away, he would be guilty of deserting his wife and child, and be compelled to leave them to the mercy of an unpitying and unsparing foe.

It was a difficult choice for him to make; but he did not shrink. He determined to go; and in this resolution he was sustained by the approval of his noble wife, who held that his first duty was to the country. And so he went away from Rushbrook, impelled by a sense of honor which he was forced to obey, but feeling that the sacrifice would achieve nothing for the cause in which it was made. O Fate! how cruel are thy decrees! O Duty! how relentless are thy demands!

Sherman and his bummers came to C—town. The town was sacked; many buildings were devoured by the flames kindled by the heartless conqueror. Rushbrook was gutted and the Vernons driven from their home. The C—town Bank was entered, its vaults were opened, and valuables and papers carried away—among the rest Roland Vernon's Deeds of Trust!

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE South was overrun. The Confederate armies were overpowered. The troops, with their paroles in their pockets, returned to their homes. The yoke of the conqueror was placed on the neck of a brave people. Desolation, devastation, political, commercial, financial, overwhelming ruin fell upon the subjugated land.

Vernon, among the rest of the people of C—town, lost heavily. Of a fortune of a quarter of a million, he saved only about ten thousand dollars. The community of which he was a member, was a sort of Tad-mor in the Wilderness, cut off from the rest of the world, connected with none of the great centres of business. Its citizens were unsophisticated, and had devoted themselves to the cause of the South in the beginning of the War with unselfishness and a sincere purpose, and throughout the struggle behaved as became true patriots. Even such creatures as Morrisson and Adams were forced by public sentiment to bear a hand in the struggle, and required to endure the common sacrifices. Consequently their faith in a favorable result, and their innocence of the spirit of speculation which was rife elsewhere during the progress of the contest, led the people of C—town into the blind conviction that Confederate bonds were the best of all investments; and, when the great awakening came, they found themselves without any capital but their honesty and their real estate, both greatly diminished in value by the consequences of defeat.

When Paul Adams went back to C—

town, he was by far the wealthiest man in the town. With thirty thousand dollars in his pocket, he was properly esteemed a *na-bob* in the midst of the general wreck of means by which he was surrounded. He might, with this snug little fortune, have lived the balance of his days, had he been disposed, enjoying every comfort of life and retaining the respect of his fellows.

Avarice, however, marked him for her own, and yielding to the evil spirit which now took complete possession of his soul, he surrendered honor, self-respect, everything to the desire for the acquisition of Gain.

The ordeal of defeat tries the strength of men severely; and the overthrow of a Cause is always the forerunner of desertion of principle and a scramble for vantage-ground on the side of the victor. So it was after the disasters to the Confederacy which defeated the cause of the Southern people. A most sudden change in the opinions of many who had professed to be among the warmest supporters of the War while it lasted, followed the triumph of the Federal government. The flag of the Union became an object of the deepest affection with some who had most detested it while the Confederate armies were winning victories; and it grew to be the fashion to boast—falsely, of course!—that the act of secession had been unfalteringly opposed by these new converts to Unionism.

Paul Adams was sagacious enough to announce his apostacy very early, observing, long before the majority of the people, the indications of the revolution of feeling that was growing. He pretended to have been

a most infamous and traitorous wretch during the "Rebellion," and claimed that he had greatly contributed to its overthrow, whereas, on the contrary, he had been an efficient and gallant officer of the Southern army.

The results of this action were just such as he anticipated and desired. Unlimited opportunities for speculation and speculation were afforded him by the agents of the government; and he rapidly augmented his resources. Then his talents won him a political distinction as one of the leaders of the "Loyal Party," and he added the emoluments of office to the gains of his private enterprises. In a word, few men were more happily situated than the son of the Puritan preacher, so far as worldly prosperity could achieve such a result.

This course of action lost Paul Adams the respect of highly intelligent and honorable people for a while; but then these are so few in every community, that he did not mind the withdrawal of their esteem. With the larger class of his fellow citizens he kept a degree of popularity that satisfied his grovelling ambition. As his wealth increased his popularity grew; and as his popularity extended and his dignity advanced, he became correspondingly pious.

He attended Church with great regularity, was made a deacon, or an elder, or something of the kind, and discharged the duties of this religious office with a sanctimony and zeal that made him an immaculate reputation for the possession of all the Christian virtues. One of the most blessed elements of Christian character, however, did not distinguish his pretended churchmanship. His hand dispensed no alms, his tongue spoke no words of charity. He was the personification of selfishness. Yet, while this was so, notoriously so, his brethren repelled, with a spirited indignation, every insinuation of doubt as to the sincerity of his devotional professions.

Brother Adams was too well off in the gear of this sublunary sphere to be suspected of poverty in those imperishable treasures, which, it is said, neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

A money king, a political leader, a pillar of the sanctuary, all these in the little town of his nativity, still Paul Adams was dis-

contented. He had another aspiration to be gratified—he wanted to be the Magnus Apollo of C—town society! And, unfortunately, there was a hindrance to the realization of this praiseworthy ambition.

He was not of "blooded stock;" and, besides, foolish people were curious enough to want to know one of his domestic secrets.

Paul Adams had never satisfactorily accounted for his wife's absence; and there was a disposition on the part of the neighbors to know where she was, why she had left her home, whether she had betrayed, or been betrayed.

At length curiosity became so much aroused on this subject that Paul found he had to do one of three things—either yield his aspirations for social position; bring his wife back to his fireside; or get a Divorce!

Paul was unwilling to accept the first alternative: he could not choose the second; so he concluded to adopt the last.

His first step in this direction was an effort to poison the public mind by circulating whispers of Dolores' infidelity as a wife; his next was the subornation of testimony as to her criminality; his next was to bring a suit for Divorce in the Superior Court.

When this last card was played the gossips of C—town were thrown into a fever of excitement; and the *pros* and *cons* of the matter were thoroughly discussed.

Public attention having been re-directed to this matter, the disappearance of Dolores again became a subject of surmise and wonderment; and the curiosity to learn the cause and the particulars of her departure, and the desire to ascertain the present place of her refuge became more intense than at the time of her flight.

Paul Adams was constantly subjected to annoyance by his acquaintances, who could neither repress their vulgar anxiety to know what they had no right to be informed of, nor take a gentle rebuff.

"Where is your wife?" they questioned. "Why did she leave you?" "Did you suspect her of criminality before she ran away?" "Do you think you will succeed in getting a divorce?" "Do you know where she is now?" "Do you ever get letters from her?"

Paul, when he gave any reply to these inquiries, generally gave very positive answers; but false answers invariably.

And still neither he, nor the gossips, learned anything reliable concerning the fugitive wife. C—town had to wait many months to learn the genuine story of Dolores' flight and its consequences. The reader must not complain, if he has to plod through many chapters to acquire the same information.

CHAPTER II.

ASCERTAINING the extent of his losses, Roland Vernon, being a young man still, resolved to make a new start in a new home. For the South, as long as there was hope of its future, he did all that patriotism demanded; but now that human energy could accomplish nothing more, he determined to abandon the land of his birth, and seek happiness in some clime of a more promising geniality.

Of all the countries in which his mother tongue was spoken—and he was unwilling to live in any other—England held most attractions for his soul. It was the birth-place of his ancestors; it was civilized without being too much democratised; life and liberty were certain of secure and stable protection under its great Constitution. There the profession which he had selected could be prosecuted, and distinction in its practice be won.

Vernon had ten thousand dollars left, and, economically expended, it would last him six or seven years. In three years he could gain admission to the bar, by hard study and close application, as he was already very well read in the science of law. If he could be called to the bar in three years, he felt confident that, with his competency for three years more, he could earn enough for the support of his family after his means were exhausted. And, if he should be disappointed in this expectation, he could place some reliance on his pen, in the hope of making literary labors supply any deficiency

Roland consulted his father, to whom his plans were communicated, and was encouraged to pursue the course which he was considering. Finding, also, that Alice and Mrs. Adams were willing to make the move, if he deemed it necessary, he concluded to carry out the plan; and the preparations for the exodus were hurried up, and an early day appointed for the departure.

The night before the morning on which he intended to leave for New York to take passage for Liverpool, Roland sat in the library at Rushbrook, enjoying a farewell meeting with the friends from whom he intended to separate himself on the morrow—friends that he loved, friends that loved him.

"And you are anxious to leave us, anxious to get to your new home in merrie old England? Ah, Alice, who would have thought that you would entice Roland from his poor old parents?" said Col. Vernon to his daughter.

"Now, father! Please don't tease me to-night, for I am too sad. You know we don't want to leave you and mother; and I'm sure you advised Roland to go! But why can't you and mother go with us? We'll wait and help get you ready, or we'll go and get settled for you to come to us. Promise, at least, that you will join us when we get established!"

Col. Vernon had been jesting, but he looked very grave when he replied to Alice—looked very grave and sorrowful.

"Abandon Rushbrook! I've grown to love the dear old place too much to desert it for a trivial cause; and, yet, you tempt me!"

"Rushbrook will never again be the happy home that you have grown to love. Wealth dissipated; no longer free; no longer able to live as you have been accustomed; your children and grandchildren gone; you and mother here alone! How changed life in the dear old place will seem! What else will you do but remember and sigh for the past?"

"Your children and grandchildren gone! Terrible! terrible! Wife, what do you say? Shall we leave Rushbrook and follow these children and grandchildren across the Atlantic? I am almost persuaded!"

"Ah! ah! If we had the means, we could go; but—"

"—Why, you have the means! My property has been confiscated; but yours is untouched. Rushbrook, and the rest of your lands, would bring ten thousand dollars; and that would support us ten years!"

"I can't sell Rushbrook! It was my father's present on my bridal day. I cannot bear to see Roland and Alice and the children go; but I cannot sell Rushbrook—I cannot sell it for any purpose, unless its sacrifice were demanded to save Leigh, or Vernon, honor, or life."

"Marse Roland!" said a servant entering at this moment, "Here's a note, sah!"

Vernon read the note; and, springing up excitedly, rushed to the door and called back the servant.

"Bring father's filly up to the gate immediately. Saddled!"

"What's the matter, Roland?" cried all, seeing that he had received a communication that evidently annoyed him.

"I must go to town. I may be late; but sit up for me. My plans may be deranged. Particulars, when I have more time!"

Hastening from the house, he mounted the horse and sped to the town at a swinging gallop. He rode to Morrisson's office, jumped from the saddle, hitched his bridle to a swinging limb, and, walking upon the portico, knocked.

"Come in, Roland!"

The lawyer knew his visitor without seeing him. He had sent the note that brought Vernon to town in such a furious hurry, and knew what would be its effect.

Roland turned the knob and pushed; the door swung back on its hinges; and the huge form of Morrisson rose against the mantle-piece, fully discernible in the glare of the gas-light.

"Well, Roland, I thought you would be down. I have been waiting for you."

"Of course, or you wouldn't have sent the note! Well, I have very little time. I come to say that I cannot comply with your demand."

"Why?"

"Because half of the fortune, nine-tenths of it, has been exhausted."

"But, then, you see, I claim that I have

a right to half as long as anything remains—to half of what remains."

"You can take that Sampson plantation. It was valued at twenty thousand dollars. But it may be confiscated; or, if not, it may sell for less—still it is worth ten thousand."

"No! I WANT CASH! Cash is the only legal-tender—gold, silver, or greenbacks!"

"But, Morrisson, it is unjust; certainly not in the spirit of the agreement. Take all the stocks, lands, debts, everything; but do not require the cash. Why, man, I go to England to-morrow. It is impossible to pay you ten thousand dollars!"

"Read that document; and see if I do not claim justly!" was the unrelenting response.

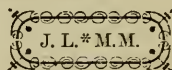
Vernon obeyed; and silently commenced reading the manuscript which Morrisson offered. Having finished the perusal, he hoarsely asked,

"Where is the ring?"

"Here it is, Roland. I reckon it's all right."

Morrisson smiled triumphantly. Vernon took the trinket and examined it.

It was a plain gold ring, not very heavy, but mounted with a square cameo set. The set was engraved, thus:



Vernon trembled visibly, and seemed wrapt in a sort of dream.

Meanwhile Morrisson walked back to the fireplace, and leant on the mantle. He scraped one of his feet backwards and forwards—scraped for several minutes with an air of unconcern. He was closely watching Vernon's features all the while.

Directly Morrisson's foot struck something. He looked down. He saw this thing rolling towards the middle of the floor, and glistening as it rolled. He looked at Vernon. He perceived that he had been too intent in his contemplation of the ring, to notice what had occurred. He walked towards Vernon; placed himself between him and the object; then turned suddenly round, stooped, picked it up, and put it into his vest pocket. He returned to the fireplace; changed his position, so as to pre-

sent his back to Vernon; took out the object, and found that it was the ring which dropped from the manuscript the night he had resolved upon the suit against Vernon—the suit in which he had failed.

"This," said Roland, after gazing at the ring which he held a long time, and after endeavoring to find a spring which should have been, but was not inside, and immediately under the set—"this is not the ring referred to in that manuscript!"

"Try this, then!" retorted Morrisson, offering another ring. "There are two of them, both alike. One of them is all right. I don't know them apart!"

Then he thanked his fortune for the lucky accident that had restored the lost bauble and saved him from detection. The first ring he gave to Vernon was a well executed counterfeit which he had made by a jeweler, when convinced that the genuine talisman was irreclaimably lost.

Vernon tried the spring of the second, and it yielded to his touch. The cameo flew back, and two very small miniatures were disclosed.

"That is the face of my au—— my mother!" said Morrisson, not unaffected by this unexpected discovery.

"This is the likeness of my grandfather!" observed Vernon, unmoved by the revelation.

"I suppose you are satisfied now? Do you still decline to meet my demand?" asked Morrisson after a lengthy pause.

"I still decline! How do I know you are the son of Mary Morrisson? How do I know but that this manuscript is a forgery?"

"You know it, because James Leigh has confirmed it in a communication to you—a communication binding on your honor for the fulfillment of a trust which he created. You know that I am Mary Morrisson's son, because he tells you so in that communication."

"How do you know this?"

"I have had the pleasure of reading that document."

Springing to his feet Vernon seized Morrisson by the collar with both hands, and holding him with the grip of a vise, demanded indignantly:

"When? Where? How?"

"Five months ago—in this office—I got possession of it after the C——town Bank was destroyed by Sherman."

"Damn you, how dare you read it?"

"I did not know its character until I got so interested that I could not stop. I'll not reveal its contents!"

"You contemptible villain, I've a great mind to brain you with this chair!"

"See here, Roland! I don't want this money, if it's to create a disturbance. I'll yield all claim; I like you, boy!"

Morrisson, who had been released from Vernon's grip, now advanced with an outstretched hand.

"Stand back!" cried Roland. "Until by your own confession you are proved a scoundrel, a foul miscreant, probing into the secrets of others, I felt some charity for your weaknesses, some sympathy for the misfortune of your birth. Now, I don't want to be contaminated by your touch. Stand back!"

Vernon paused to collect his thoughts. Having recovered his calmness, he continued:

"A fair and liberal interpretation of the promise contained in that manuscript would not require me to meet the demand which you have made. The greater part of the estate which I inherited has been swept away. Lands, all but the Sampson plantation, confiscated; stocks, bonds, etc., rendered valueless; farming implements, horses, mules, cattle, everything taken by Sherman; debts, notes, accounts, worthless. I have nothing left but ten thousand dollars, in cash, which I acquired and did not inherit; and the Sampson plantation. I offer you the plantation, you refuse it. I think these facts absolve me; and I would refuse to be swindled, but for the fact that you offer to release me after acknowledging your villainy in prying into affairs that I kept even from my father. I will not be under any obligation to such a scoundrel; I WILL PAY YOU THE PRICE OF YOUR MOTHER'S SHAME, TO-MORROW!"

Saying this, Vernon rushed with a fury of passion from the office, mounted his horse, and rode to Rushbrook.

There was a light in the library. He

entered and found the family awaiting his return. He was silent a moment ; and then said :

"We will not go to England. I have met with a disappointment that will force us to remain in America !"

CHAPTER III.

EARLY the next day Roland Vernon went to town and paid Morrisson the ten thousand dollars. This left him almost penniless. The Sampson plantation was still in his possession ; but was subject to libel and sale under the confiscation laws, at that time being rigorously enforced. Consequently he could neither mortgage it, nor sell it ; and, even if he could have found a purchaser, he would have been restrained from parting with this property, as he was bound up by an obligation which was attached to its ownership.

The future frowned darkly and menacingly on Roland Vernon. His family had just been increased by the birth of another son ; his wife was in very delicate health ; he was disabled and unfit for any business that demanded physical exertion ; his profession would yield him literally nothing ; his father was barely able to earn a meagre support, and could but poorly afford to be encumbered by the additional responsibility of maintaining three adults and two children, which he would have to do if his son and family continued at Rushbrook.

Tortured with a consciousness of inability to discharge his obligations as a husband and father, Roland Vernon became a victim to despondency, and fretted and writhed under the sense of dependence which he now experienced until his mind nearly gave way under the pressure of accumulated misfortunes.

He endeavored to secure employment, but intellectual labor was not in demand, and light work, such as book-keeping, clerking, etc., etc., could not be procured.

He wrote for the magazines, but the pay was small, and the income from this source utterly inadequate to the satisfaction of his absolute needs.

The prospect grew less and less hopeful in the South, until, in the Spring of 1866, the gloom culminated in heavy and unbroken darkness. Utter despair seized Vernon when six or eight months of miserable existence were spent in looking forward to better times, and terminated in increased disasters.

When everything had grown to be as desperate as possible, and another month's disheartening developments would have driven him to insanity, Vernon had the extreme good fortune to receive nine hundred dollars in payment of a claim which he had regarded as utterly valueless for several years. This money had a magical effect upon his mind : Hope was aroused, Ambition rekindled, Energy, Pluck, Perseverance, all re-awakened ; and, with a cheerful determination to rebuild his dilapidated fortune, he devoted a week's thought to the solution of the problem, With such a capital what is my best course, what my best investment of money, talent, and industry ?

About this time Vernon saw from the newspapers that large numbers of Southerners were flocking to New York ; engaging in all sorts of professions, trades, and employments ; and succeeding admirably. Not having learned that many newspaper publications lack an important element—Truth, he resolved to join these exiles, and was allured by the tempting and glowing descriptions of the success of others, to hope that he might achieve ultimate distinction and wealth by the practice of law, and was confident that he could make a living from the start. He was gifted with wonderful powers of oratory, and had devoted a great deal of study to the criminal law—on this talent and this learning he founded his high expectations.

Since his marriage Vernon had spent only about two years with his wife, and had been absent from home so much of his time, and suffered so many privations and discomforts, that he found it very difficult to decide upon enduring the further separation which this plan would necessitate, if carried out ; but the thought that he could soon find a comfortable home where he could have his wife and children always with him, and the reflection that his life with them, depending on his father's labors

for a subsistence, for the last twelve months, had been full of unhappiness, induced him to make the sacrifice which the parting from them would cost. So he went bravely to work, and made ready to depart for the scene of his new struggle against Destiny; got ready, not without some forebodings that after all he might fail, with a cheerful spirit of resignation to the severe Fatality that was to deprive him of the sweet endearments of home.

He gave six hundred dollars to Alice for the defrayment of her expenses and those of the children, until he could come home and carry them back with him, or send them further provision; and took the other three hundred himself, depending upon that small sum for at least a year's support.

"Surely, my wife," said he, when bidding Alice farewell—"surely I can wring the paltry gift which I seek from the reluctant grasp of un pitying fortune! New York is a great cosmopolitan city; and there must be a living there for a family so unpretentious in aspiration as we will be when we go there to establish a new home!"

"I trust so, Roland! I sincerely hope that you may succeed! But be careful not to be too sanguine. You must remember that the Goddess is stone blind, and does not always bestow her favors on the worthiest!"

Ah, Alice! Alas! Alas! 'Tis too true! Fortune is blind; and the worthy are often doomed to misery!

CHAPTER IV.

BROADWAY was plethoric with humanity; and the great masses of life swaying back and forth, pushing and pressing and elbowing along the splendid thoroughfare, presented the same idiosyncratic appearance that the similar everlasting crowd has maintained for several decades.

Roland Vernon sat in the reading room of the Astor House, looking over the files of the morning papers, and occasionally rais-

ing his eyes from the closely printed pages to stare at the thronging procession of human heads, sweeping up and down, and clattering over the pavement below.

He read through the Herald's editorial and news columns, glanced at the advertisements, and threw down the great daily with a yawn of fatigue, when a hand tapped him familiarly on the shoulder. He looked up and met the gaze of a well-dressed gentleman whose features were fresh in his memory, but whose name he could not recollect.

"Vernon, don't you know me?" said this person, smiling and extending his hand.

"Perfectly well! I remember your face perfectly well, but not your name. Still I'm glad to see you!" was Roland's immediate reply.

"Thank you! I'm glad to see you—very glad! When I left you in a delirium in Spotsylvania hospital I never expected to meet you again."

"Ah! General Carson! How could I have been so forgetful! Have you been well, General?"

"Yes. Ever since I have lived here I have had excellent health. By the way, what are you doing here?"

"I am here to locate—to practice law."

"Indeed! I am here, and doing very well, at the bar—splendidly, I may say!"

"How long have you been located in the city, General?"

"Ever since we left Virginia—nearly a year ago. You are idle! Then walk to my office with me. It's just above here—No. 24—Broadway. Take one of my cards!"

Vernon assented to Carson's proposition; and, lighting cigars, the couple strolled along together, smoking and chatting of the war. In a few minutes they reached Carson's office; and, after scrambling up three flights of stairs, entered and drew seats up to the window which opened upon the City Hall Park. With their feet planted on the window sill and their cigars in their mouths they soon lost themselves in pleasant conversation.

After an hour's talking, being invited by his companion, Vernon announced his plans to his friend and sought his advice.

"I learn," said Vernon, "that I can be admitted on motion. My North Carolina license will serve me a good stead, although it did me very little good at home. As I am more familiar with Criminal Jurisprudence than with any other branch of the science, I shall make its practice my speciality."

"No, no! That will not do! The Criminal practice is disreputable—a gentleman must have no connection with that line of professional business."

"Why? You amaze me! I thought that the most celebrated lawyers were in the habit of practicing in the Criminal Courts."

"You are mistaken! They never do, except in very important cases. Even then they are not engaged by the prisoners as attorneys; but are employed as advocates to assist the regular counsel."

"Well, I have been mistaken! I had always thought the criminal practice was quite as respectable as the civil.—It is more so, if there's any difference, in the South."

"Exactly; and so it is in the country at the North. But it's different here—very. For instance, Charlie Smasher is a great criminal lawyer, his business is worth twenty or thirty thousand dollars a year; but he has no social standing, is a very Pariah, and is called 'The Thieves' Friend'—a title that he glories in and of which he is exceedingly proud. He is the best of his class! Well, now, if you go into that practice you will have to associate with persons of that ilk. Of course it would be unpleasant, intolerable, even if you could make a million a year."

"How entirely different from what I had imagined! I thought I could make reputation, wealth, and acquire honorable station as a criminal lawyer. The practice gives such play to a man's powers. In the civil practice there is very little opportunity for the display of oratorical abilities."

"Well, you know, oratory has played out here! Few speeches are made in the Court-House—when one is made, it is brief, dry, but pointed—not eloquent! Our best lawyers make no pretensions to oratory!"

"Then I made a great mistake in coming to New York!"

"Why?"

"Because my *forte* is speech-making. I cannot win my way up through any other faculty."

"Not so! You've got good sense; industry, I suppose; and, if you can afford to wait, may work your way into a fair business in four or five years."

"Consoling! What am I to do in the meantime?"

"Work; study; make yourself a profound lawyer!"

"But how shall I live?"

"Oh! As for that, you must be rich yet; although you lost so heavily."

"Indeed, I am not! Two hundred and fifty dollars is my whole fortune!"

"Ah! Then you can't even buy a partnership? I paid five thousand dollars for my start! If I hadn't done that, I would probably have been forced to wait ten or fifteen years to build up the business I now enjoy. A stranger is at a great disadvantage here—if he comes without reputation he has to take his turn and run his risk—if he brings a reputation with him, people argue that he will extort large fees on that account, and when they have to pay for first-class talent prefer Brady, Evarts, O'Connor, and men of their class."

When Vernon rose to leave, it was with a heavy heart. He had hoped so fondly; he was about to realize so poorly. He began calculating, as he went down the steps, how long two hundred and fifty dollars could be made to last by the practice of the strictest economy, and whether he could not make two hundred dollars a year by writing for the magazine to which he had sent an occasional contribution—a doubtful matter, as the pay was insignificant, and space limited.

When he descended into the street his cogitations were disturbed. A pedestrian accosted him, and turning quickly he recognized an old army friend—the Major of a Virginia regiment.

"Why, Courtney! You here?"

"Yes, Vernon; and pleased to find you!"

The friends stood near the curbstone and chatted until Vernon found that Courtney was disengaged for the day, and insisted on his accompanying him to his room at the Astor.

Reaching this retreat Vernon filled a

couple of pipes with choice old Durham, which he had brought from North Carolina, and handing one to his friend and taking the other himself, sat down by the window and talked of the grand life they had led together in the vanished days of the Confederacy. Both spoke unreservedly of their misfortunes and of their aspirations. Vernon laid great stress on the disappointment which the revelations of Genl. Carson foreshadowed, and gloomily expressed the apprehension that he would be forced to return to the South. Courtney listened silently until his companion's story was fully told, and then undertook to encourage him and to dispel the fears which he was disposed to entertain.

"Why not turn Bohemian?" said Courtney. "You can probably make it pay you something, until a better opening offers!"

"I don't understand you!" was the reply. "Bohemian?"

"Indeed! Don't you know what Bohemianism is? Why, I am a Bohemian. When I found that I could get no employment in my old line, I got me a gray goose quill, and commenced writing for the press—turned Bohemian. The name is applied because the outside writers for the city papers are supposed to be a wandering class, with no home ties, no local habitations, and subject to no social laws—supposed to live from hand to mouth, to sleep in the streets, to be floats on the great ocean of metropolitan life; drifting and driven, to and fro, without any volition or purpose. It's a pleasant life for a single man like myself. And when a fellow can get off a real spicy thing, there's no difficulty in selling it for a good price. Try your hand—you used to be a dashing writer!"

"Become a writer for the city press! I am afraid I lack the capacity. I might write well enough for a country newspaper; but I fear I could get up nothing worthy of publication in a metropolitan journal."

"You never made a greater mistake in your life! The HERALD, which is the Jupiter Tonans of the Journalistic Olympus, is edited with less literary ability than any respectable newspaper that I read; yet it pays better for its articles than any other member of the New York press. Matter, not style; novelty; items; food for thought;

something readable in its stuff, not in its mere expression; is what Bennett likes to print. The polish, the rhetorical excellence, is not esteemed of any great importance. Of course, the more grace and sprightliness there is in the composition of an article, the better it takes; but a rough diamond, so it's a real diamond, sells as well as if the gem were polished."

"Do you make a living by your pen?" asked Vernon, flattering himself that Courtney was an inferior writer to himself.

"Yes. My pen is my entire reliance. For six months I have had no other resource. But I cannot say that I live in any grand style! If I would write regularly, and take the necessary exercise, I could make from twenty-five to thirty-five dollars a week!"

"Exercise!" echoed Vernon. "What has the exercise that you take to do with making your pen pay you?"

"Oh! You don't know? Why, there's an intimate connection between a Bohemian's exercise and his pay. In the first place, you must walk about, with your eyes and ears wide open, and your wits on the *qui vive*, to get telling subjects; although a very dry fact will frequently do, if you give Fancy full reign, and have the embellishing faculty in a high state of cultivation. In the next place, after you have written an article, it must be disposed of; and in making this disposition the locomotive powers are tasked to the utmost, in the tramping from one printing-office to another, in the search of a purchaser. I go to the HERALD first; then make the rounds till I effect a sale, trying the other dailies next, and then the weeklies. But aren't they a devilish gruff set of people—these editors! They will snap a fel——"

"How do they pay for articles—by the column?" interposed Vernon, highly interested in Courtney's revelations.

"Sometimes by the column; sometimes by the article. The HERALD has paid me as much as five dollars for a third of a column. It was a highly imaginative piece—a glowing and vivid description of the murder of six school marms, by a four-year-old 'rebel,' in Charleston, purporting to have been written from the spot; but, in fact, done up in the Astor Library. The

average pay is about seven or eight dollars a column—often as low as three dollars in the third rate papers; frequently as high as fifteen or twenty in the thunderers.”

“I think I could write some interesting papers on the condition of affairs in the South—do you suppose I could get them off?”

“I know it! Why not throw them into the shape of letters—‘Special Correspondence, etc., etc.’—and draw to some extent on your imagination for high coloring? The HERALD would jump at them in that form!”

“Questionable morality, that? A man has no more right to practice a deception on the public at large than he has to swindle an individual!”

“Oh, but you don’t have to deceive! The publishers do that! They make a habit of buying fictions of the kind, and of publishing them. You can tell them they are written in New York—that will not affect the sale!”

“I prefer not to be a party to such doubtful transactions!” responded Vernon.

“Very well! Fix them up in the form you suggested—but you’ll not get as much for them!”

“That is the HERALD establishment over on the corner, isn’t it? What a magnificent building! The office must be perfectly splendid?”

“Yes. Did you never go through it? I tell you what we’ll do; we’ll walk over; and you can see ‘old P——,’ the manager, and find out whether it is worth your trouble to write the papers you speak of. We can then get a sight of the inside; but there’s not much to be seen on the editors’ floor.”

Vernon readily assented to Courtney’s proposition, and sallied forth under his ciceroneage. They made their way across Broadway, avoiding omnibuses, carts, express wagons, and the hundred other kinds of vehicles, that were rumbling and dashing up and down, and reached the curbstone in front of the splendid structure on the corner of Ann and Broadway, which, in its architectural beauty, surpasses all the public edifices of Gotham, and stands a monument to the taste and enterprise of its remarkable owner.

Inside the glass doors, crowds of persons of every degree and age were passing forward to the counters behind which the indefatigable clerks were busily engaged receiving advertisements, subscriptions, and changing money, or distributing letters and papers, and, with an unparalleled industry and politeness, serving the wants of the unceasing throng.

The lobby was full of a variety of human beings, waiting for their turn, flocking around the writing-stands, dashing off the announcements which they desired to have appear, as fast as the execrable pens which Mr. Bennett supplies for the use of his customers would admit.

Vernon started to open one of the doors near the corner, but was checked by Courtney.

“Not that way! Here! Follow me!” said the Bohemian, then passing to a side entrance on Ann street. “This is the way to approach the editors’ rooms. We must mount these stairs!”

Vernon accompanied his friend, winding and winding up the circular stairway until his limbs grew weak and his head grew dizzy.

“A card, sir!” was the salutation of an African gentleman of much suavity of manner and a bandaged eye, handing a piece of square pasteboard, as he showed the Southerners into the waiting room, and, with a most affable smile, pointed them to a seat on a very comfortable green velvet covered sofa.

“Write, ‘For Mr. P——. R. Vernon of N. C.’ That’s the way!” whispered Courtney.

It was done; and, in a very brief space of time, the enlightened and courteous freedman returned and blandly announced that Mr. P—— was at the Council Board, but would be out shortly. Then, smiling, bowing, walking backwards, he retired.

“The Council Board!” ejaculated Vernon, “What’s that?” to Courtney.

“The editors meet every day for consultation. The HERALD is conducted by a congress of editors. Mr. Bennett seldom comes down; and his son is an imbe—”

“—Mr. Vernon!” said a rough bearish-looking man, with a giant’s head on his shoulders, and an impatient hurried man-

ner that seemed to say, "Come, be quick, sir. I have no time to idle away," putting his pliz in the door and englooming the apartment with a black thunder-cloud of a frown.

Courtney pinched Vernon and whispered, "There's old P——!" Vernon sprang up and walked to the door.

"I am Mr. Vernon!" said he.

"You wanted to see me?" growled P——.

"Yes, sir! I called for that purpose."

"Come then—what is it? Talk fast!"

"Are you in the habit of purchasing matter for publication?"

"We pay for what we print!"

"I have no doubt you do, sir. But I asked if it is your custom to buy."

"And I told you that it is our custom to pay for what we print."

"I perceive, sir, that you are in a facetious mood!" said Vernon, his blood mounting.

The idea dumbfounded P——. He in a facetious mood! Flattered at the suggestion that he was capable of such a thing, he laughed a little dry laugh, and explained:

"You fail to understand me. We take manuscripts, I meant to say; and, if we use them, if they are published in our columns, we pay liberally for them."

"Then you make no contracts for articles on particular subjects?"

"Sometimes!"

"I thought I would offer you a series of papers on the 'situation' at the South."

"If they are able, we will buy them. Let's see the manuscripts!"

"They are not written. I wanted to know whether you would probably buy anything of the kind."

"We don't buy without first examining the matter."

"So I presumed! Shall I submit the articles to you, when written?"

"Yes—one at a time! If we like the first, we'll look at the others."

"Thank you, sir. I'll bring one to-morrow!"

Mr. P—— here cut the colloquy short, and dodged into his private editorial room; and Vernon rejoined Courtney.

"I am without a room-mate," said Court-

nay, "and have a very nice room. Suppose you club in with me. We can get good comfortable board in the house for forty dollars a month—not a very fashionable location, but good enough. Over on North Moore street, out of the noise!"

"Are you in earnest? I would like to get good board cheap—as to location, it makes no difference. Staying at the Astor House will break me!"

"Certainly I'm in earnest!" responded Courtney. "Come be my chum, and we can work together—form a literary partnership! After a while you can rent desk-room in a law-office, and commence practicing. By being Bohemian and lawyer both, you can make a living, and gradually build up a practice and reputation."

"By Jove, I'll do it! I'll go this afternoon!"

"Good! Let's take a drink in honor of the compact!"

And Courtney pulled his companion down into a cellar; and they "smiled."

CHAPTER V.

THE boarding-house, into which Vernon was introduced by Courtney, was a pleasant place, and for its convenience and comforts, was decidedly the cheapest on Manhattan Island.

The landlady was peerless. She was kind, attentive, and as warm-hearted and lovable a woman as ever made sunshine in a bright home.

For this reason, if for no other, Vernon was fortunately situated. But, in addition, there was another advantage arising from his association with Courtney: Very often he failed to sell his best manuscripts; but Courtney, who was wise in the ways of Gotham, and who had acquired a deep and intricate knowledge of the character, and a penetrating insight into the nature of those peculiar animals—the newspaper publishers of New York—could always take these rejected wares, and secure excellent prices.

There was a disadvantage attendant on this connection, however, which subjected

Vernon to serious inconvenience. He soon found that Courtney was fonder of frolicking than of hard work, and that he was addicted to intemperate drinking. He could have excused this, if Courtney had not invariably grown quarrelsome, while in a state of intoxication, and surrendered himself more and more completely every day to the mastery of this fearful habit.

Still, from his articles for the *HERALD*, to which he contributed occasionally, having made an impression on P——, by his papers on the "Situation" at the South, and from his writings for the weekly papers, he earned enough to maintain himself in tolerable condition, and was enabled to send remittances to his family with some regularity. From the start he paid his expenses, and kept the two hundred and fifty dollars, which he brought from home, laid by for a rainy day. So he got smoothly and happily through the Summer and Fall.

Vernon rented desk room in General Carson's law office, soon after his arrival in New York, and spent the hours between ten A. M. and four P. M. in prosecuting his professional studies, and waiting for the clients who were confidently expected to ultimately seek his services. The money he paid for rent, and the few law books that were called a library, out of extreme courtesy, was badly expended, for it was the last of November before he had a call. And precious time, that might have been devoted to writing, and that would have saved him much night toil, was lost in this same way. Courtney told him this; but he refused to relinquish the hope of working himself into eminence as an advocate, and positively declined to abandon his profession.

One morning after weary months of patient waiting—a bleak November morning—the first client came.

"Is this Mr. Vernon's office?" inquired this visitor of the office-boy, who stood gazing with astonishment at the question.

"Yes, sir. Do you wish to see him professionally?"

"I do!"

"Then I'll see if he's disengaged. Take a seat, sir."

Going out, and returning immediately, the boy continued:

"You can see him, sir. In that room, if you please!"

Of course he could see him. The boy knew that well enough. But then he liked Vernon, and did not wish to impress the first client with the idea that the young lawyer could be *always* found disengaged. That might have injured Vernon's prospects.

The stranger entered the room in which Vernon sat poring over Chitty, and, seeing him, exclaimed:

"Ah, Major! I am delighted to find you looking so well."

"Why! Adams, how are you? I had no idea that you were in New York."

There was great cordiality in Vernon's manner—he could not have given his dearest friend a warmer greeting. And this fact evokes an inquiry, which some student of Human Nature will please have the goodness to answer, as it is concerning a point upon which the world needs enlightenment—*Why is it that old animosities are so quickly and certainly forgotten when enemies meet in strange lands? Why?*

"Only been here a few days," said Paul Adams, after the usual questions had been asked and answered, and several topics had been exhausted. "I have some law business, and desire to consult you. Doing well here, I hope?"

"Yes—tolerably!"

"Can you spare me an hour or two of your time?"

"With pleasure! I shall be disengaged all day."

Adams, having obtained this permission to proceed to business, stated his case with luminous directness.

He professed to have learned, from one source and another, that Dolores was in Rochester, holding the position of governess, in the family of a wealthy widower; that she was living in comfort and luxuriance, and was moving in the best society of that city; but that she had not escaped the suspicion of impurity, although she was upheld by her employer, whose influence in the community was sufficient to prevent her from suffering ostracism on account of the scandals in circulation against

her reputation. He professed, also, to have information that the widower with whom she was living enjoyed her favors, and to shield himself, as well as her, exercised his influence to hush up all rumors against her, and to cover her misbehavior from the eye of his acquaintance.

He stated, further, that he had instituted a suit for divorce in the North Carolina Court; but found that criminality had to be established so positively, that he had abandoned the proceedings; and had come to New York, where he could prosecute under more favorable circumstances and where he would have a better opportunity to secure the necessary evidence, to endeavor to secure a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*.

He then asked Vernon to accept the management of the case; premising that confidence in his ability and integrity, family connection, and so forth, induced this selection of counsel; and insisting that the matter was one of the greatest delicacy, and that Vernon ought not to decline to act, as he could better protect Dolores, if she were innocent, than any other attorney whose services could be employed, and that if she were guilty his duty to society ought to impel him to do what he could to redress the wrong she had committed against social law; and referring to the unpleasant consequences of a public imputation on the virtue of his wife, of which he could be relieved, whether successful or unsuccessful, as, in the latter case, Vernon's assertion of her innocence would stop every slanderous tongue in C—town.

Vernon was determined when Adams commenced making his statement to peremptorily refuse to accept the case; but, so wily was the client in his presentation of his request, that, at the conclusion of his remarks, he was won over completely.

"In view of my friendship for Mrs. Adams," Vernon replied, "I do not think it would be proper for me to act in this matter; under ordinary circumstances, I would not; but, if I may befriend her, possibly, by turning prosecutor, I think I had better consent to do so. Before committing myself, however, I must express my conviction that she is wholly guiltless; but, if, with the understanding that such is my

opinion, you still desire to secure my services, you can have them."

Although Paul Adams had mingled deliberate falsehood, wild speculation, and ascertained fact, in his statement to Vernon; he really believed, nevertheless, that Dolores was guilty, and that an investigation of her conduct would establish his hypothesis as truth. He had a few facts—that Dolores was in Rochester—that she was living in the family of a widower—that envious persons in the city had uttered calumnies against her; he held the theory that all women are weak and virtueless; and upon these facts and this theory he built his supposition. Unfounded as it was, he was convinced of its correctness; and, consequently, did not hesitate when he received Vernon's response.

"So much the better!" he cried. "If you are assured of her innocence, you will not proceed without incontestable proofs; and I am willing to rely on your energy to have a thorough search made for evidence. However, I have no doubt of her guilt!"

"Then, I will employ a detective and have the case worked up. Meanwhile, we will wait patiently. It will take time, and a great deal of money, Adams!"

"I know. I can afford to spend a great deal. I will be liberal, Vernon!"

Vernon made no reply. Still, he could not help thinking that, if Adams was liberal, it would be the first time. He was not shrewd enough to penetrate the mystery of his client's motive, and was not aware that success in this suit was a fortune for the suitor.

"How much money do you want?" continued Adams. "Will two hundred dollars do for a start—to pay expenses I mean. I don't include your fee!"

"Yes; more than enough!"

Adams handed over the cash; Vernon pocketed it, gave a receipt, promised to act without delay, and agreed to keep his client informed of every development. Then the interview terminated.

As soon as Adams departed, Vernon walked out, and went in search of a detective. He found one Jacob Keenscent, who had good recommendations; employed him and gave him instructions; and, that afternoon, hurried him off to Rochester.

Adams went back to his hotel perfectly delighted. He had played for a high stake, and was under the impression that he had won. He knew Vernon thoroughly, and appreciated his ability; but it was not his talent that was wanted. Adams was smart enough to know that Dolores, as soon as proceedings were commenced, would apply to Vernon for counsel; and he was unwilling to have such an antagonist watching his manœuvres. Consequently it was to his interest to place Vernon in a position in which his honor would compel him to decline conversing with her on this subject. It might turn out that there was no evidence against Dolores, and in that event evidence would have to be suborned. If this should be necessary, Vernon would return his fee, throw up the case; but his high toned professional punctilio would restrain him from going over to the other side, or revealing any designs within his knowledge, however much his feelings might prompt that course.

No wonder Adams was delighted; he had accomplished almost a miracle.

CHAPTER VI.

KEENSSENT went directly to Rochester, and, with the clues given to him by Vernon, commenced work perseveringly. He made searching but well-disguised inquiries, and kept a close watch on Dolores. In a few days he got into a situation to make a thorough investigation, and obtained facts which soon led him to a conclusion.

The following letter to Vernon will give the reader the details:

ROCHESTER, Dec. 10th, 1866.

DEAR SIR:

I have pressed matters since I left town. I found where Mrs. A. lived; got in with a shrewd Yankee girl, a servant in the family; had Mrs. A. pumped thoroughly. The result was an unsatisfactory report. I then got acquainted with Mr. M. (He don't look like a Lothario!) He invited me to his house. (I had to play the heavy swell, and

you may be certain that it has cost a good sum.) I went, and met Mrs. A. Found her, just as every one told me, when I inquired, a very pretty, but green woman; and so sad looking! I got into her confidence, turned her wrong side out, and found nothing against her. She told me the story of her flight; gave me a history of her movements from the time she left C—— town till now; and casually mentioned at different times the names of all the parties whom she saw, talked with, stopped with, or travelled with between there and here. I have her record in Rochester, without a day's break. I wrote to all the parties whose names she mentioned; got replies; and putting their testimony and that of people here together, I regret to say that I am forced to believe that she is not guilty. Please send me fifty dollars to pay my bills, and fare home.

Respectfully, &c.,

JACOB KEENSSENT.

To R. VERNON, Esq.,

No. 24- B'way, N. Y.

When Vernon received this communication he sent a note to Adams asking him to call immediately; and, in an hour's time, the messenger returned and announced Adams' approach.

When Adams entered, Vernon handed him Keenscent's letter. Adams read it hurriedly. Vernon stood silently.

"Well," said Adams, "what do you intend to do? It's plain that this detective has been bought up. Shall I employ another at a larger price?"

"No!" responded Vernon. "If you are not satisfied of the correctness of his statement, I will make the thing certain, one way or the other. I'll play spy myself. I'll go to Rochester, and find out the truth. Of course I'll not be a detective; but I'll employ one, send him up, follow him, and watch to see whether he is idling or working faithfully."

"Just as you say! Have you any money? If not, I'll supply you!"

"Give me a hundred dollars. If I need more, I'll draw on you!"

The arrangements having been completed, Vernon left the city the next morning and went to Rochester. He remained there

a fortnight; and then returned unexpectedly. As soon as he got back to the city he sent for Adams, who hastened to receive his report.

"Well, Vernon, the result of your visit in a few words!" said Adams, with considerable emotion.

"Then, your wife is as free from all semblance of criminality as the chariest vestal that ever lived."

"Indeed! You don't think so?" exclaimed Adams, with a start of surprise.

"I do—most decidedly! She is not only a pure, virtuous woman; but she still loves you. She wants a reconciliation, on her own account, but especially on account of the children."

"Her children! She only had one when she left the South."

"The second was born within three months after her flight! She confesses the wrong of having left you; but extenuates the circumstance by intimating that you gave her just cause. If such is the case, your duty is plain. Go! get her and the children; carry her and them home; and be happy! Let all thought of divorce be banished!"

"But that is impossible! It is too late for me think of taking her back—I have been denouncing her as an adulteress!"

"And do you intend to let a fear of what the world will say deter you from the performance of a grave duty! Bah!"

Adams turned red when Vernon said this with a vehemence of scorn. Then, after a moment, he remarked:

"We'll dismiss that idea! Now about the prosecution of the suit: I can get evidence that will serve my purpose; and, if you will use that evidence, without asking any questions as to its character or source, and will push the trial, I WILL GIVE YOU A THOUSAND DOLLARS!"

Adams in his whole life had never in the aggregate betrayed more weakness than in making this offer. He appreciated this in a second.

Vernon's eyes blazed a moment; and, then, he sprang at Adams with the fierceness of a tiger, and clutched him, and dragged him to the door. "Go, you damned villain—go!" he muttered, in a horrible, hissing tone, kicking him fur-

iously and sending him spinning down the staircase.

CHAPTER VII.

"VERNON, let's go to the Broadway to-night. 'Romeo and Juliet' is on the bills!"

This was Courtnay's salutation to Roland, as he entered the little attic room which they occupied, one evening about a month subsequent to the violent scene between Vernon and Adams.

"I've no money!" was the reply.

"Never mind that! I've enough to get a couple of seats in the gallery. We Bohemians oughtn't to be proud!"

"Very well, then. I have no work for to-night, and will go."

Two men, fonder of the Drama, than Vernon and Courtnay, were not to be found in New York. They spent many a hard-earned dollar frequenting the theatres—dollars that they would have devoted to the purchase of no other mere luxury. So far as they were concerned there was very little preference entertained for particular seats. A front place in the gallery was as pleasant as a seat in the orchestra chairs. They went to see, and hear, not to be seen.

So this night, having finished their suppers, they lit their pipes, and sallied forth, crossing over to Broadway, turning up which they walked leisurely to the theatre, and reached their seats some minutes before the curtain ascended.

A few evenings previous Florence had played "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" before a very large audience in this same theatre; and on that occasion Vernon and Courtnay occupied the same seats they now secured, in the front row of the gallery. The friends had not failed to appreciate the acting of the entire company that evening; but were most particularly struck by the comicality of the personage who played the rôle of Green Jones.

(The reader is doubtless aware that this character is an exceedingly comic one: G. J. is a gentleman of wealth, marries a

professional lady of song, whose notions are rather extravagant, has his last penny spent to gratify his wife's whims; when he loses his fortune Mrs. G. J. teaches him the noble art of making a support by the nimble use of his shins behind the footlights; he is relieved by a legacy that unfortunately follows the fate of its predecessor. G. J., upon being reduced to poverty a second time, protests against returning to the stage, and selects a less dignified but more congenial and profitable vocation, becoming A MUTTON-PIE VENDER. Much to the disgust of Mrs. Saint Evermond, as his wife calls herself among her professional friends, G. J. perambulates the streets, crying his wares in stentorian tones—"MUTTON-PIES! MUTTON-PIES! ONLY A PENNY!")

The part was personated by a tow-headed, dandyish-looking actor, who usually filled such roles as Oswald in "Lear;" and filled them very admirably, too—always making an amusing idiot.

Taking their seats and waiting for Sampson and Gregory, and Abram and Balthasar to open the play with their clownish fight, Vernon and Courtnay looked over the bills to see the cast of characters.

"Why, Vernon, our friend G. J. is to play Romeo! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Indeed!"

Glancing at the programme, Vernon found it as Courtnay had said: Green Jones was to be transmogrified for the occasion into the gentle Romeo.

The curtain ascended. The first act was passing off with decided *eclat*. But Courtnay did not watch the stage. He was pregnant with an idea, and began to laugh to himself in a most immoderate manner.

The curtain fell.

Courtnay leaned far over the railing in his front, and carefully scrutinized the faces and clothes of the audience below. Looking down intently for two or three minutes, he turned to his companion.

"Vernon, don't you think a large part of this very crowd was here the night of 'The Ticket-of-Leave Man?'"

Vernon looked over the railing, as Courtnay had done, and scanned the features of the immense throng. Then, after a leisurely inspection, turned round and replied:

"Why, yes; I think so! I see a great many of the same moustaches, same bald heads, same bonnets, cloaks, eyes, and painted cheeks."

"Well, you get back a row or two before the next act commences. I am going to create an explosion!"

"Be careful, Courtnay! I wouldn't do anything rash!" whispered Vernon as he obeyed.

The drop-curtain began to rise.

Courtnay instantly became the picture of attention. He leaned over to catch the words of the actors. He fixed his eyes intently on the stage. His face was without a trace of the merriment that struggled in his bosom.

The first scene of this act closed.

Still Courtnay did not make any movement; and Vernon began to feel more at ease.

The scenery was shifted. The frantic Romeo flitted through Capulet's garden—flitted in the dim light of a very pretty muslin moon. Juliet appeared upon the balcony, and commenced the rhapsody to which the Montague replies in such an earnest strain.—Then the amorous dialogue of the lovers was recited. Juliet commenced the outburst, "Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face, etc., etc." The audience was wrought up to the highest pitch of intense interest.

As Juliet concluded the speech with the words,

"Pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered."

Not a sound was audible in the great concourse that hung on the eloquence of Mrs. Bowers' happy rendition.

Clasping his hands in a fervor of passion; uplifting his eyes with a world of love nestled in their dilating pupils; Romeo began—

"Lady! By yonder blessed moon I swear—"

Before Montague could pronounce the other line of the couplet, a shrill, keen, powerful voice from the gallery piped,

"MUTTON-PIES! MUTTON-PIES! ONLY A PENNY!"

Romeo staggered ; turned pale ; broke out into an uproarious "Haw ! haw !" and made his exit amid the roars of the audience. As the parquette, dress-circle, galleries, and even the boxes, resounded with the beating of sticks, ringing of laughter, clapping of hands, and echoing and re-echoing shouts and cat-calls, the daughter of the Capulet fled towards her kind old nurse, who, it may be supposed, was near by, and dropped swooning into her arms.

While the Bohemian's Comedy received its applause, the curtain fell upon the Tragedy of Shakspeare !

In the midst of the confusion, Vernon and Courtnay made their escape just in time to avoid arrest by a "knight of the star," who, jumping three steps at each leap, bounded up one stairway, while they descended the other, and lost themselves in the throng of pedestrians, rushing along the great thoroughfare, homewards from their day's work, at a quick, nervous pace.

On the steps of the Saint Nicholas they halted. Standing there, when they approached, was a neat, dapper little gentleman, tapping the toes of a pair of highly-burnished boots with a silver-mounted rattan. He was evidently a person of some force ; for his eye and forehead, with that unerring precision with which physiognomy proclaims characteristics, betokened an intellectual endowment of a rare and powerful order.

Courtnay saluted this person and was received with a pleasant smile.

"Let me present my friend, Major Vernon !" said the Bohemian. "Mr. Silvertongue ! You are professional brethren, and should be acquainted."

"Very happy !" quickly responded Mr. Silvertongue. "I know Major Vernon by reputation. I have been intending to seek you out, sir, to consult you in regard to the character of a person from your State with whom I have had some disagreeable dealings recently—a Colonel Adams !"

"Ah !" exclaimed Vernon, with an astonished look.

"You know him ? Yes ?—I supposed so ! He informed me that you have advised with him since his arrival in the city."

"He employed me to manage a case,

which I subsequently abandoned. I have not met him for a month or more. Is he still in New York ?"

"Yes !" answered Silvertongue. "I saw him a few days since. He is a very strange person, or a very dishonorable one, I must say, Major !"

"Yes ! Somewhat eccentric in his notions of honor !"

"Courtney will excuse us, I am sure," proceeded Silvertongue ; "and, as I leave town on business to-morrow and will be absent some time, with your consent, Major, we will have a brief professional conversation, if we can find a seat inside. Suppose we walk back into the reading-room !"

Vernon looked at Courtnay. He said, "Don't mind me—go !"

With this, Vernon followed Silvertongue. They walked back into the reading-room and obtained seats, secluded enough to be secure from interruption.

Silvertongue informed Vernon that Adams had employed him to prosecute the divorce case ; that, as counsel, he had sent a detective to Rochester, who, upon going there, made the necessary investigations and reported his inability to procure an iota of proof to sustain an allegation of adultery against Mrs. Adams ; that he had not rested with this, but had gone to Rochester himself and found that the detective was right ; that he then met with Keenscent, who accidentally told him of his connection with the same case—the first intimation he had of Vernon's having been the original counsel ; that he had advised Adams to relinquish the determination of proceeding further ; that this advice was rejected ; that a proposition to suborn testimony, accompanied with a large fee, had been made ; and that he had refused this offer peremptorily but respectfully.

"Your experience," said Vernon, "is almost identical with mine !"

"Well," continued Silvertongue, "when I refused, he left my office on Park Row, and entered the office of an attorney named Shyster, who is on Tryon Row—a fellow that does a very dishonorable sort of practice ! Now I do not know any of these parties intimately ; but I have inferred, from Keenscent's statement, that you were acquainted with Mrs. Adams before she sep-

arated from her husband, and that you are kindly disposed towards her."

"Your inference is a correct one!"

"Then I say this, I believe from Adams' proposition to me, and from the fact of his going to Shyster immediately afterwards, that he is bent upon doing his wife a great wrong, under the semblance of obtaining justice. If the woman is innocent, she merits protection; you are her friend; she should be put on her guard. Therefore, I come to you and tell you my suspicions; adjure you to be watchful, if you desire to protect Mrs. Adams; promise to join you in every honorable effort to defeat the infamous designs of this villain!"

Vernon rose, as Silvertongue concluded; and grasped his hand warmly, remarking:

"I thank you, sir, for this information. I do hold Mrs. Adams in great esteem. I will foil her husband's schemings. If I hear of anything important, I will communicate with you. Together, we may be instrumental in saving a very lovable, and an innocent lady; and in bringing a scoundrel to grief."

"Depend upon my co-operation! Good Night!"

Silvertongue extended his hand, with these words, as Courtney rejoined them in the lobby.

Vernon pressed the hand of this honorable lawyer with great warmth, and bade him farewell. Seeing that Courtney seemed fatigued, Vernon proposed to go home; and, in a few minutes, was rapidly walking down Broadway by the side of his chum, pressing in the direction of home.

The conference between Vernon and Silvertongue was not held any too soon. That very night, in that very hotel, two other lawyers were perfecting a plan to entrap and ruin Dolores.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENTER a large handsomely furnished apartment on the third floor front of the St. Nicholas; and, sitting near the grate, in earnest consultation, conducted in low,

whispered tones, you will find a couple of as depraved wretches, despite the appearance of respectability that both present, as the millions of America can afford.

Colonel Paul Adams, who occupies the chair on the right, needs no introduction. He is unchanged in looks, manners, and morals, as he now sits in his room, on rascality profoundly bent.

The slick personage opposite him is George Shyster, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, of No. — Tryon Row. He is a type of a numerous class of New York lawyers—men who attend the sessions of the Tombs Courts, and the sittings of the Police Judges, doing business for a clientele composed of the lowest criminals of the worst wards—men of small gifts but of vast unscrupulousness; without acquaintance with the principles of the law, but deeply versed in the trickery and pettifoggery of the profession; having no fund of learning in the lore of the Commentators, but with limitless acquisitions in the knowledge of humanity—men who are warm espousers of the doctrine of the great Englishman that everybody can be bought—men always ready to defend a thief, to purchase the perjury of a witness, to secure a divorce at prices ranging from a lottery or pawn ticket indefinitely upwards.

Mr. George Shyster was a smirking, smiling, oily-tongued scoundrel—but no worse than his host and client; only the latter was more prudent and possessed far superior talent.

What an irrepressibly brilliant Tombs lawyer Adams would have made!

Adams is talking. He says:

"You think there is no danger of detection, exposure, and even worse consequences? I will not scruple to take any course that is safe; but I do not care to get myself into prison."

"There's not the slightest trouble. The whole affair can be managed with such delicacy that it will never provoke a comment. I have had an extensive business of this kind, and have never been caught yet," confidently rejoined the practitioner from Tryon Row. "There was the Blower case, which I fixed nicely without the public's knowing a word of the matter until it

was all over ; and then, only a month ago, I succeeded gloriously in the Jones case—the defendant was rich and influential, but I——”

“—But you didn't have an enraged and indignant Vernon watching you!”

“Oh! There's nothing to be feared! If he's so hot headed and chivalrous—such a fool as to repel the offer of a *bonus* with violence, instead of accepting it as a sensible person would have done—he is too high strung to stoop low enough to balk us—he is not one of our sort; and, you, know, ‘It takes a rogue to catch a rogue!’”

“But I tell you he is as sharp as a briar!”

“I don't care what he is—the thing is feasible! I told you several days ago, when you came to my office, that I could get the divorce. I can do it, if you want it. And be sure of one thing, you may trust me to baffle such a dainty fellow as he!”

“Well then what do you propose?” inquired Adams, with an air of blended apprehension and desire.

“Write the letter to her; if necessary, see her; get her out of the way; and keep her anywhere out of New York for thirty days.”

“But suppose she refuses to go; suppose she suspects me; suppose she has consulted Vernon?”

“Provide for these contingencies in your letter. Stay! Give me a sheet of paper and a pencil, and I will fix the document. I know how to manage women; and if you will send what I write, she'll never doubt your sincerity.”

Adams rose, opened a writing-desk, motioned to Shyster to take a seat at it, and, lighting a cigar, puffed away nervously until the epistle was finished.

“I guess *that* will do!” said the villain, as he handed the draft of the letter to his companion.

Adams read it; and then, with a disconcerted start, turned and exclaimed:

“What! Bring her to New York and have an interview with her! I thought that would only be necessary as a *dernier resort*? I cannot do it.”

“Why so?” was the imperturbed inquiry.

“Because I do not like to meet her!”

“Why?”

“Because, I have treated her in such a manner that I cannot look her in the eye.”

“Poor, tender heart! Damn it, man, can't you act? Can't you profess repentance? Didn't you delude Vernon at first? Then surely you can dupe a woman blinded by her love!”

“But what's the use? Why should I see her?”

“For two reasons: To find out if she has consulted Vernon, and, if so, the result; and to serve the summons and complaint, and get her acknowledgment of service.”

“But, granting the first to be a good reason,” rejoined Adams, “how am I to accomplish the other very delicate design?”

“I'll fix that! Will you proceed or retire?”

“Proceed!”

“Then send off the letter to-night, and come to my office early to-morrow.”

The business of the evening having been finished, Shyster soon took his leave.

The plotter passed Vernon and Silver-tongue in the lobby; but did not know of the counterplot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE defendant in the action of Paul Adams against Dolores Adams, a petition for divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*, accepted service of summons and complaint; but neither answered nor demurred within the period of the law's limitation.

Mr. George Shyster, counsel for the plaintiff, asked for a reference of the alleged facts; it being necessary to sustain the specifications of the complaint, before he could move for judgment by default.

Judge C——, of the Superior Court, granted the order, and appointed the referees.

The referees appointed a meeting and Mr. Shyster, backed by several witnesses, was punctually present. The witnesses were sworn to “tell the truth, the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth," and, as soon as they were questioned, proceeded to tell the false, the whole false, and nothing but the false, with an air of candor, and justice, and sympathy for the defendant, that completely imposed on the examiners.

Shyster had paid the whole batch of them liberally, posted them carefully; and was serenely confident that the story of each would flow smoothly out.

He introduced John Dollarlove first. Dollarlove testified that he lived in the city and knew Colonel and Mrs. Adams; that Colonel Adams was a native of Suffolk county, but had resided in Brooklyn until within the last four years, since which time he had lived in New York; that Mrs. Adams was a native of Vermont, the daughter of a Mr. Vaughn with whom he was well acquainted; that he was present at their marriage, which was celebrated in the city; that Colonel Adams and his wife were at present residents of the State. His testimony was rigidly sifted by a cross examination by one of the referees, and was not weakened. (Price of witness: \$50.)

Washington Sticktoit was next introduced. He deposed that he was a regularly licensed minister of the gospel, a resident of New Jersey, and that he knew the plaintiff and defendant; that while in charge of a congregation in New York, in 1858, he married them in the Church of which he was the pastor; that, since then, Mrs. Adams had separated from her husband, and that he had heard frequent scandals concerning her; that her reputation in society was very bad; that he had seen a Mr. Johnson (Johnson was a man of straw, of course) sitting by the side of the defendant in a room of a house on Gates avenue in Brooklyn, about three months before; that he had seen her lock the door and pull too the blinds; and that no other person was in the room at the time. Cross examination elicited that this observation was made from a second story window immediately opposite. (Price of witness: \$100.)

Four other witnesses gave evidence of such explicit and detailed minuteness and

such revolting nature as to leave no room for doubt of the entire guilt of Dolores.

Shyster announced that he had no further proof, when Mr. Chargetmhigh, one of the referees, who was a friend of the plaintiff's counsel, remarked with a winning smile to his fellows that he thought the allegations of the complaint were fully established, and suggested that an immediate report of the facts should be made.

This was done. The decree of the Court was delivered, divorcing Paul Adams from his wife Dolores Adams; enjoining her against marrying again; and giving him the custody of the children.

Dolores was in Springfield, Massachusetts, where she was waiting with a heart made sick by deferred hope for the promised coming of her husband—waiting in the full expectation of a reconciliation, when she received a brief note from Shyster, enclosing a transcript of the judgment which took away her reputation.

Until that moment, she did not even know that a suit for divorce from her had been brought by Paul Adams. Until that moment, she had looked forward to a new and happier career as his wife. Oh, the consternation, the agony, the wild insanity of that moment! Oh, excruciating moment! Its horrible disclosure made her mad!

Her husband divorced; her honor lost; her character blasted forever; her children seized and carried away. Without a friend in hundreds of miles; without money, and her situation probably lost; without aim or hope in the future, and in the midst of un-pitying strangers. Most crushing calamity!

No wonder that Dolores cast herself upon the floor in a phrensy of grief, and lay there moaning, and wailing out her curses against God, and begging that He would punish her with Death!

Meanwhile, Paul Adams, when he was informed of his success, armed with the proper authority, proceeded to Rochester, got his sons, and hurried back to North Carolina to carry out a project which had long been maturing in his mind.

CHAPTER X.

ALL day long Dolores kept her room. She refused her meals, for her heart was too full of misery to think of the common wants of the body; and so, alone in her wretchedness, she contemplated the extent of her affliction.

Hours of weeping, hours of piteous prayer for God's mercy, hours of indignant denunciation of the Omnipotence which permitted the foul wrongs she had received, hours of dismay, suffering, and lamentation, such as few women ever spent before, as few women will ever spend again, passed between the reception of the cruel letter which wrought her desolation and the sombre twilight.

When night began to close in upon the earth, the darkness of despair commenced battling with and driving out the few remaining hopes to which she clung in the depth of her sorrow. Reason, already unsettled, was well nigh dethroned.

But when the blackest hour of the night has come, the day-star begins to ascend and soon glimmers on the horizon's edge. Another such hour of distress unrelieved, would have been fatal to Dolores; but ere its sands had run out, a manly step echoed through the passage outside her door, and a brave, cheering voice cried, "Dolores! Dolores! Admit me—admit a friend!" That voice, every tone of which was familiar to her ear, restored intelligence, reason, hope.

Dolores sprang to the door, opened it, and fell fainting upon Roland Vernon's shoulders. Roland caught her up in his strong arms, and carried her to the sofa, and laid her upon it with a woman's gentleness. Then he walked to the bell-rope, fearfully excited, and jerked it furiously, summoning a servant.

There was no light in the room; but he managed to grope his way into the passage, where a gas jet was burning; and there lighted a taper with which he returned. Having made a light, he awkwardly endeavored to restore Dolores to consciousness.

Dolores was long in recovering; and when the servant came, Roland was glad to

retire. Several restoratives having been applied, however, at length signs of a restoration began to discover themselves; and very soon the unfortunate lady was sufficiently conscious to inquire for her friend.

At her request, Roland was called back; whereupon he drew a seat up to the sofa, and took her hand in his and attempted to offer comfort.

It was rather an unusual situation for Vernon. Among his many accomplishments, he, unfortunately, did not reckon a familiarity with hysteria. So he was a little non-plussed at first. Still he contrived to perform this novel office with more than ordinary grace and ease.

"Do you feel stronger, Dolores?" he inquired.

"Yes, thank you!" answered Dolores, striving to evince her appreciation of his kindness. "I am much better; and will get up now, please."

"No, don't! I think you had best keep still. I will sit here by you, and we will talk of your troubles."

Dolores feebly insisted; but Roland gently dissuaded her from her purpose, and succeeded in keeping her quiet.

Roland had been astonished to find his friend in Springfield, and was curious to know why she was there.

"Tell me how you happen to be here," Dolores?" said Vernon, in a subdued sympathetic tone; "but for an accident, I should never have found you."

"I came here in obedience to my husband's wishes. I expected him to join me, until this morning, when I received information of his—his base deception. You know everything, I suppose?"

"Yes! It was on that account I came. I saw the announcement of the divorce in the *Times* law reports, and accidentally noticed, in the *Republican's* hotel arrivals, your name. That was in Rochester, where I went for you first. I should never have looked for you in Springfield."

"And I should never have come here, but for him!"

"But, tell me! How did you see him? Why? What inducement did he hold out?"

"It's a long story," she said, and, taking a couple of letters from her pocket, and handing them to him, she added—"Read these—they will tell you part, I will tell you the rest."

Roland took the letters and read them rapidly. The first ran thus:

ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL, }
N. Y., Jan. 26, 1867. }

MY DEAR WIFE:

Through my friend, Mr. Silvertongue, who informs me that he made your acquaintanceship in Rochester, I learn of your whereabouts. If, as I sincerely hope, you still love me, I beseech you to come to me immediately. I am stopping at the St. Nicholas Hotel, and will have an apartment prepared for you. But for urgent business, requiring my presence here, I would hasten to you, to beg you to forget the past as I have forgiven it. Leave the children, we will return for them together. Enclosed, find sixty dollars.

Yours devotedly,

P. A.

Mrs. DOLORES ADAMS.

The other was as follows:

ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL, }
N. Y., FEB. 4, 1867. }

DEAR WIFE:

I cannot get off to see you again before you leave for Springfield. Wait there for me until I come—I will be with you in two or three days. If I am delayed, as is possible, I will write to you. Enclosed find one hundred dollars for your expenses. Please acknowledge receipt on the wrapper, as I have not great confidence in the servant's honesty.

Yours tenderly,

P. A.

Mrs. DOLORES ADAMS,
Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"When I received the first letter," said Dolores, as soon as Vernon returned the second to the envelope, "I hastened joyfully to respond in person. Paul met me with great cordiality, but not as a wife. He spoke of the pain my flight had occasioned him; said that he greatly de-

sired a reconciliation, but that he wanted some explanations before it could be consummated. He advised me to think about the matter calmly, and that I might not be too much disturbed by him, sent me to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, promising to call every day. He did so: and, under the pretense of giving me full time to consider whether I could contentedly return to my position as his wife, suggested my visit to Springfield, where he promised to come in a few days, to get my final answer. I told him I had no need for reflection, but he insisted, and I consented. He visited me every day, for several days, at the Fifth Avenue, and the time for my departure was fixed. The day before I left, he called and promised to see me off; but instead of coming, he sent the second letter."

"How did you acknowledge it?"

"By doing as he requested—writing on the wrapper. The servant suggested that I should say, 'Service of within is hereby acknowledged,' which I wrote and signed. He said that was the customary form."

"Great God! What sort of wrapper was the note contained in?"

"It was in an envelope, but the envelope was wrapped in a large sheet of white paper, with writing inside."

"Did the wrapper seem to be a whole sheet, or an half?"

"My gracious! What difference does that make?" exclaimed Dolores, raising herself on her arm, and looking fixedly at Vernon. "I should think it was a whole sheet!"

"THE SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT, as sure as I live!" cried Vernon. "Why, Dolores, you let them dupe you—assisted them!"

"How?" she inquired.

"By endorsing that wrapper, 'Service of within is hereby acknowledged,' you made testimony against yourself; and enabled them to have the case referred for examination of facts. Perjurors appeared and swore away your honor—easily done, as you did not appear to defend. But tell me the rest—Did he write you while here?"

"Yes. I received several letters—each offering excuse, and appointing a future time to meet me; and each begging me to stay here."

"That is enough! Rest content! I'll

have your children back, and another sort of divorce in a very short while."

"Oh, get me my children! Get me my children, protect me in keeping them; protect us from him, and I ask nothing else. Do this, Roland, and I will be your slave forever!"

She pressed his hand with warm gratitude, as she said this; and then sobbed like a distressed child.

Vernon leant over and kissed her affectionately—kissed her with a brotherly fondness—and responded in a tone of deepest sympathy:

"I will, Dolores—I will! Poor, poor girl! To think that you have been so outraged by that scoundrel."

Saying this, Vernon took the letters, the two she had shown him, and the others urging her to wait, and rose to go.

"Sleep now, Dolores. I will come for you in the morning, and we will go to Rochester, where I will collect such evidence as I can; and then I will hurry back to New York, and have the judgment set aside. It was obtained by fraud, and it shall be made void; or I'll make the press ring with your wrongs!"

CHAPTER XI.

SILVERTONGUE and Vernon collected the evidence necessary to prove the fraudulency of the proceedings by which Paul Adams secured his divorce, and went before the Judge who had issued the decree with a motion to open the default.

They had little trouble in presenting such a strong array of facts as to compel the immediate annulment of the divorce, and the issuance of an order for the restoration of Dolores' children.

When Shyster was informed of the institution of this proceeding he kept close, in great trepidation, lest his rascality might be punished, but wrote and recalled Adams, telling him that a new development demanded his return to New York, but giving no particulars. Adams instantly obeyed this call, and brought the children with

him, having no one to leave them with in C——town. This was fortunate for Dolores, for within six hours after Paul's arrival in the city, they were seized by an officer and placed in the custody of the joyful mother.

Adams was struck with consternation at the turn affairs had taken, and in his tumult of fear he sought Shyster, with whom he hastened to Canada.

The fact that Adams was on the point of marrying again, with the purpose of furthering certain ambitious aims, occasioned him unbounded disappointment at the sudden overthrow of his deeply-schemed fabric of villainy; but, at the same time, it caused him to resolve not to stop, until he succeeded, or utterly ruined himself in the attempt. He cursed himself, he cursed Vernon, cursed Silvertongue, cursed his own unpardonable weakness in proposing to purchase the connivance of honest lawyers in his nefarious scheme—cursed all with a vim that would have shocked his fellow elders of the C——town church. But, when the first paroxysm of rage was over, he set to work with untiring energy and restless perseverance—characteristics inherited from his Puritan ancestry, and the only really estimable trait they had transmitted—to achieve the accomplishment of the designs which had already cost him so heavily.

He paused, but only to consider the means. Then, unable to settle upon any policy, he again had recourse to Shyster's inexhaustable fertility and ingenuity of expedients. He quickly suggested a plot, and offered to provide the ways and means—for a small compensation.

"Ah!" cried this friend, remembering the unusual amount of his former fee, and rubbing his hands in a glee of delight at the prospect of another. "Ah, if you are bent upon having a divorce, and do not care about the children, I can readily manage it for you! And there will be no after-claps either!"

"How? Name the price!" was Adams' reply.

"Well, as to price, we'll talk of that hereafter," answered the Attorney. "But I can get you a Connecticut divorce without any trouble."

"But it strikes me, if my recollection is not at fault, that a Connecticut divorce, unless the defendant appears and makes a fight, is not heeded in any respect by the Courts of other States, because there, a judgment by default cannot be opened," observed Adams, with an air of dissatisfaction.

"Very true; and, if you were to marry in another State on such a divorce as I propose to obtain, I do not think it would shield you from the penalty for bigamy. But in every other respect it would be good!"

"What in the devil do you think I want a divorce for, except to get married again?" asked Adams with a provoked and contemptuous look.

"And how was I to know? You never gave such a reason for your action," responded Shyster with considerable warmth, adding—"I see no way to arrange the mat-

ter for you in that view of the case. None!"

"Stop! Suppose I should get a Connecticut divorce, and then go to Connecticut and marry—how would that work?"

"Oh! Then you want to marry a Connecticut lady! If you marry in Connecticut, a Connecticut divorce will be perfectly good, of course!"

"Then get it for me!"

"Then give me five hundred dollars for expenses—five hundred more as a fee."

Adams was a little astonished at the demand, considering the fact that he had paid a like sum for one already, which had been upset; but he, at length, accepted Shyster's proposition.

Shyster commenced work at once; and this time under more favorable auspices, as Vernon and Silvertongue were not aware of the design, and, consequently, were not on the watch.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

BELOW the confluence of the Yadkin and Uharie in the Western part of the county of Montgomery, North Carolina, there is a large tract of land, of well wooded forests and fertile fields, stretching North and South for a mile or more along the river shore, and spreading out to the width of a quarter of a mile towards the East.

On a bluff, about the centre of this plantation, and frowning down upon the river, stands a large two story brick house, from the back gallery of which the eye takes in a pleasing view of growing crops, out-houses, barns, cotton-gins, stables, indeed all the buildings necessary to extensive farming, together with a clump of negro cabins, now mostly untenanted.

There is an air of comfort and elegance surrounding the premises, which, taken in connection with other circumstances impressingly apparent, assures the beholder that the owner of this domain has been blessed with great wealth.

This was formerly the plantation of David Trenton, Esq., one of the thriftiest planters of the Pedee section; and from its rich soil he produced, during his life, large quantities of grain, cotton, and other agricultural staples—such quantities as enriched him year after year, until he had few peers in wealth in the old North State.

During the war of '61-'65, Mr. Trenton accumulated several hundred bales of cotton, which he refused to sell for Confederate money. He died of a broken heart in 1865, when his slaves were emancipated and much of his property was destroyed by

the results of the war, and this cotton was sold by his executors at about thirty cents a pound, the proceeds falling to his only daughter, Miss Susan Trenton.

Miss Susan was neither pretty, nor intelligent; in fact, she was both homely and weak. Her greatest personal attraction was a well rounded form; her greatest weakness an intense desire to get married.

Miss Susan's hand was sought by many suitors, who wanted her money more than they wanted herself; but fortunately she had good advisers, and inherited a great fondness for money, so she escaped the snares of many profligate adventurers who were bent on entrapping her and her fortune.

Miss Susan spent the winter of '65-'66 in Wilmington, where she was the guest of a distinguished member of the bar of that city. While at his house, she met a lawyer from C——town, who was in attendance on one of the New Hanover Courts; and was so charmed with the agreeable manners and deferential bearing of this person, that she completely lost her heart in the two or three days of his brief stay under the roof of her host.

To the observant eye of this person her emotion was so apparent from her behavior, that he took advantage of her inability to conceal her delight in his conversation, and displayed such a deep interest in her society as to make her the more fondly cherish the sentiment which he had awakened; and, when he was leaving, she invited him to visit her at her home upon her return, a privilege of which he freely availed himself afterwards—so freely that she

could attribute his attentions to no other feeling than a reciprocation of the tenderness felt for him.

The result was a natural one—a declaration and an acceptance. Of the antecedents of her lover, Miss Susan knew nothing whatever; and worse, when her friends sought to counsel her, and to warn her against his wiles, they having ascertained his status in C—town, and learned his history, she declined point blank to listen to them, and bade them hold their tongues in such a peremptory manner that they let her take her own course. She took it and kept it.

And so Miss Susan's affairs stood in the early part of June, 1867. One afternoon, about this time, she sat on her front piazza, overlooking the waters of the Pedee, and by her side sat the person to whom she had plighted her love, and to whom she expected soon to be married.

The day for the celebration of the nuptials had been set for several weeks before; but, only a week previous to the appointed time, the intended husband was compelled by unavoidable circumstances, as he informed her, to ask for a postponement of the ceremony. He had now just returned from New York, and was sitting by the side of his betrothed, endeavoring to persuade her to yield her desire for an old fashioned country wedding at home, and attempting to induce her to accompany him to "the land of steady habits," and have the hymeneal knot tied by a Connecticut Priest or Magistrate.

The person by Miss Susan's side was Paul Adams. The indefatigable Shyster had pocketed his five hundred for expenses, and his five hundred as fee; and the Connecticut divorce had been secured.

Paul Adams was a wily diplomatist; and he was exerting all his power of eloquence to obtain Miss Susan's consent to a Connecticut marriage.

"The arrangements which you propose are so common-place, so unromantic," said he, "that, while I will defer to your wishes, I really do not think with you that it is the best that can be made. It will consume so much time, for it will take you a fortnight to get everything ready. Now, my idea is, that it would be better for you

to issue invitations to your friends to meet us here, say a month hence, to congratulate us on our marriage; and that you, in the meanwhile, should take a bridal tour. Say that you pack your trunk to-morrow, and start with me the day after to Laurinburg, where we can take the train for Wilmington, and from there go to New York in thirty-six hours. In New York you can spend a week in sight seeing and shopping, and then go over to some pleasant Connecticut village, and be married. Afterwards we can spend some time in travelling, and still be back here for the reception of guests."

"But the very idea of my going away from home to get married! That would never do!" exclaimed Miss Susan with a horrified look. "It would be better to get married here, and then go upon the bridal tour."

"Oh, no! That would be too much like other people. I want to astonish the natives with the novelty. Why our marriage would be one of the wonders of the age in this neighborhood. Instead of dating everything from 'the last freshet' the people would be forever talking about this or that having happened before 'the romantic wedding,' or such and such a thing having occurred after 'Miss Susan's marriage at the North.' I am a strange sort of person, Susan—may be a little too sentimental—but I think it would be delightful, and my heart is set on it!"

Paul got off the last sentence with telling effect.

"Oh, I am sure, my dear Paul," replied the lady, yielding with much grace, "it is of no importance to me. I will do just as you say; because, you know, I am to hereafter be governed always by your opinions. I think, however, that I had best consult uncle Thomas before I decide. I will send a note, and ask him to come over this afternoon."

And, so determining, Miss Susan left Adams, and went to carry out her intention.

"Now, by St. Paul, the work goes bravely on!" cried Adams as soon as he was left alone. "If I can keep the infernal uncle quiet, I have won the victory. I'LL HAVE HER; BUT I'LL NOT KEEP

HER!' But how shall I manage the old curmudgeon?"

About twilight, while Adams was sitting on the piazza, where he and Miss Susan had been together all day, Mr. Thomas Trenton rode up to the gate and dismounted. Perceiving his approach, Paul turned to his betrothed and whispered to her to retire and leave him to confer with her uncle.

"I know," he added, "that he dislikes me; but I think I can remove his prejudices. I will bring him to you in a few minutes to announce his perfect satisfaction at our plans."

All the afternoon Adams had been scheming and planning, and he was now ready for the ordeal through which he was to pass. He could not face the uncle squarely; so he was resolved to outwit both uncle and niece. And he did completely!

When Mr. Trenton mounted the steps Adams met him, and told him that Miss Susan, at his suggestion, had sent for him to submit some business matters connected with her approaching marriage to his consideration, and that he was commissioned to present them. Then he proceeded to explain that he proposed to enter into a marriage contract by which all her own property and a handsome jointure from his estate would be settled upon Miss Susan, and by which she would also be permitted to devise her estate at her death. Having made this preliminary statement he next submitted the carefully drawn instruments containing these provisions to the inspection of the clear-headed old man.

"You know," casually remarked Adams, "that I have already as much money as I want; and, as I marry from love, not as a mere adventurer would, I prefer to have things arranged in this way. Do you approve?"

The old gentleman scrutinized the papers very closely, and did not find a flaw; and then replied,

"Why, yes; this all seems proper enough. I must say I see nothing to disapprove." Then, wiping his spectacles, and looking intently at Adams, whose face was flooded with light from the parlor, he said in a low voice—"BUT WHERE IS YOUR OTHER WIFE?"

Adams was startled by the question; but recovered from the surprise in a second.

"You will oblige me, Mr. Trenton," said he, assuming an air of hauteur, and speaking as if his sensibilities were greatly wounded, "by not sporting with my distresses. If I have been so unfortunate as to marry a person who deserted me, and from whom I was forced to obtain a divorce, you shall not taunt me with impunity because of that calamity. Please never mention that subject in my presence again!"

"Oh! Then you've been divorced! I did not know it!"

Adams was silent, and pretended to be greatly agitated.

"My niece knows nothing of this, sir. She would never hear anything from her friends."

"She had no need! I have informed her of the unhappy consequences of my first marriage;" (a lie of the whole cloth!) "and she did not care to have others asperse me to her. That has been her reason for refusing to listen!"

"Well, if she *will* marry you, I must say I approve of this step!"

As Mr. Trenton concluded his sentence with the words, "I must say I approve of this step," Miss Susan returned to the piazza, and overheard his expression.

"Oh, then, if you approve," she cried, "I will no longer demur!"

Adams skillfully changed the subject of conversation, and so gracefully led the Trentons away from the topic which he feared to have dwelt upon, that his point was carried triumphantly. But, before Mr. Trenton took his departure, the overseer was called in at Adams' request, and the deeds were duly signed sealed and delivered, and witnessed by him.

Paul was not without an object in the seemingly generous execution of these instruments. He knew that a large proportion of Miss Susan's ready money had been invested in mortgages on real estate in Baltimore, and that these mortgages ran for ten years. Consequently, and as he feared she might die without issue before the expiration of that period, and as his aspirations were to be something more than a mere tenant by courtesy of his wife's

lands, or an enjoyer of the interests on her investments, he preferred to give her the entire control of her estate, and to risk wheedling her into making him her heir at her demise. Subsequent developments assured him of the wisdom of his choice.

In some men depravity is the result of circumstances; in others, it is innate, inherent. Adams inherited his predisposition to crime; but then he assiduously cultivated the native bent of his heart, and the times in which he lived afforded opportunities for the display of his fecund diabolism.

So far he had played the rascal and won. His next step was to be a graver one—the climax of his villainy. He realized this, and wondered what were to be its consequences.

Aye! what?

CHAPTER II.

"COME with me, Vernon!" said Court-nay about the middle of the third week in June. "I want to walk—I have been cooped up all day."

"Which way do you go?" was the inquiry of Roland, who also felt the need of exercise.

"Up Broadway! We may meet a friend, possibly. It's about time for the pleasure-seekers to commence flocking Northwards."

"Very well, I will join you."

Vernon could not walk very fast, for he had never entirely recovered from the effects of his wound, so he and Court-nay sauntered along slowly, criticising whatever happened to attract their notice with all the freedom that your true Bohemian exercises habitually.

"Do you see that woman in front of us, Vernon? She has resolved upon committing suicide," remarked Court-nay, directing his companion's attention to the person to whom he alluded.

"Indeed! Poor thing, what distress drives her to such a step?" responded Vernon in a tone of sympathy. "If you are acquainted with her, we will join her; and,

possibly, we will be able to remove the cause of her despondency."

"No, no! I'm not acquainted with her; nor have I any idea of her reason for desiring to make her clearance from this snug port—I would like to anchor here forever! But, without doubt, she is killing herself by degrees. Look at her form—very robust! See how her chest swells out—very fine! But, ye Gods! mark that waist—I could span it with my hands! That woman is bent upon self-murder; she has chosen the rack of fashion for the accomplishment of her end. Tight lacing is killing more women than the cholera!"

Just at this moment, the lady turned her head so that the friends could get a good view of her face.

"She's not pretty!" ejaculated Court-nay.

"She's dropped her handkerchief!" exclaimed Vernon.

"Now's a time for the display of your gallantry—restore it to her!"

"I'll do that very thing!"

And Vernon hastened to secure the fallen cambric, and soon overtook its owner, into whose possession he surrendered it very gracefully.

In one corner of the handkerchief, in the familiar characters of Paul Adams' handwriting, the name, SUSAN ADAMS, was written. Vernon scrutinized her features but did not recognize her—she was an utter stranger.

The Bohemians, after this adventure, halted a few minutes nearly opposite the Saint Nicholas; and the lady gained on them and was soon lost to view.

After a pause, they resumed their walk, and upon passing the Metropolitan Hotel, Vernon glanced through the window of the first floor drawing-room and saw in one of the mirrors at the back of the apartment the reflected form of the lady of the lost handkerchief, and small waist, and heard a voice very strikingly resembling that of Paul Adams saying to some one within:

"How lovely you are, my wife! What an elegant form! What an exquisitely small waist!"

All these circumstances set Vernon to thinking; and he soon concluded that Paul

Adams was in the city; that he was again married; that the lady who Courtney said was determined on suicide was his wife; and—how ridiculous!—that the husband by flattering the wife's vanity, was conniving at and instigating her insensible strides towards death by tight lacing.

By the time Vernon settled all this to his satisfaction, the drug store of Hegeman was reached; and, here, Courtney caught Roland's arm and said:

"I have a friend in here—Doctor Brown, who is clerking it for a living. He is a Virginian, and a clever fellow. Come in with me, and I'll introduce you."

Vernon complied with Courtney's wish. He was presented to Dr. Brown, who was off duty at that hour.

While the three Southerners sat together in the back part of the store, there were several customers in front of the counter keeping the clerks on duty pretty busy, and, after they had conversed twenty minutes or more, several other purchasers entered. Brown excused himself a moment, said that he would have to volunteer for a little while, and went forward to assist in waiting upon the wants of the crowd.

At that moment, Vernon's eye was attracted by the entrance of two men, one a stranger, the other an acquaintance from childhood.

At length Brown commenced attending to the calls of this pair; and, after purchasing several articles and paying for them, the personage recognized by Vernon, asked in a quiet self-possessed voice,

"Have you any arsenic?"

"Certainly! White?" replied the druggist without any suspicion, for the articles called for before were such only as a physician would buy, and he supposed he was waiting on a brother of the Medical Faculty. "How much do you want?"

"I will take two ounces," was the distinctly uttered reply.

"I suppose you are a physician?" asked Brown, after delivering the arsenic.

"Yes!" was the unhesitating response.

With that the customers went out; and Brown returned to Courtney and Vernon.

"Doctor," said Roland, as soon as he took his seat, "please remember the face of the man who bought that arsenic. I'd

stake my life that there's murder in his mind. I know him!"

"Are you certain?"

"Yes. His name is Adams—PAUL ADAMS!"

"Yes; that is his name. He wears his vest unbuttoned except at the bottom, and I saw the name on his shirt-bosom."

"Will you remember his face and this incident?" eagerly asked Vernon.

"I will; yes—certainly, I will! But, my God! are you in earnest? Do you think he intends——?"

"—Poisoning somebody? Yes! He lied to you when he told you that he was a physician. He is a lawyer; and the smartest scoundrel alive!"

"Good heavens! What shall I do—shall I put a policeman on his track?"

"No. He could prove a good character; and it would do no good. But he would prove what he does not possess. He bought that arsenic to murder with—for that, and no other, purpose!"

CHAPTER III.

FROM Hegeman's, Vernon and Courtney returned to their lodgings, upon reaching which a note from Dolores was handed to Roland. Reading it, he found that she was at the New York Hotel, where she was very desirous of seeing him immediately. As soon as he got his supper, therefore, he retraced his steps, and after a rapid walk entered the hotel parlor, where she was awaiting his coming.

Taking a seat on the sofa, by her side, Vernon soon possessed himself of information as to the cause of her appearance in New York, and was sympathising with her because of her new troubles.

"I thought," said he, "that you would find your anticipations to be unfounded. The publicity which was given to the fact of the original separation from your husband by the steps taken to have the decree of divorce reversed, was obliged to operate to your disadvantage. Since you have lost your situation, my advice is, that you go

back to C—town, and try to struggle along there. I know my father will do everything in his power to assist you; and I pledge you my aid to the extent of my means—but, you know, all of us are very poor now!”

Dolores expressed her gratitude; but replied:

“Oh, yes; I know! But if you were ever so rich, I could not allow you to place me under any further obligations. I could not go to C—town to be dependent on anybody—especially on you, to whom I am already so deeply indebted. There’s much that I owe you which I do not know how I will ever repay—two hundred dollars borrowed from Alice, the money you lent me on leaving Rochester, the expense in which my law proceedings involved you, and a great deal more.”

“Never mind these things, Dolores. I can wait until you are fully able. Don’t let unimportant matters add to your distress.”

“If my father and mother were alive,” she continued, “I would have them to call upon, and could refund—but they are dead—father died during the war, mother since we left the South. But—but I am very grateful to you and Alice, and if I live I will pay you sometime.”

Saying this, Dolores’ self-control gave way; and she burst into bitter tears and lamentations.

“Pshaw! Dolores! Dolores! Are those tears to be my recompense? If I have conferred any favors, surely they merit a better reward than mistrust and idle weeping!”

“Oh, I am so miserable, Roland! I do not know what to do. I could teach, if I could get employment; but my children are obstacles. I can see nothing for them and myself but starvation!”

Then her flashing eye shot a glance through the falling tears, and fell fully and calmly upon Vernon’s face; and she impulsively said:

“But we will not starve! If we are to die, I have a preference as to the manner of the death. I have determined upon my course when the last hope is fled. To keep my children from suffering the dreadful pangs of hunger, and to avoid the same

agony myself, I will terminate their existence and my own in the quickest and most painless manner. I brought them into the world, and I will carry them out. Oh, that they had never been born!”

Roland Vernon was not a Christian, consequently the bigoted intolerance that would permit no pity for a heart-broken woman’s woe, after such a declaration, did not restrain his sympathy. He was not shocked. He did not tell Dolores that she was a murderess at heart. He experienced no loathing for this wretched creature who acknowledged herself capable of what the law pronounces a crime. But his eyes filled with tears, and his heart was sore with tender compassion.

“I hope, Dolores,” said he, “that you will be spared such a cruel necessity. So long as I can earn bread for myself and my wife and little ones, I will share it with you.”

“Roland Vernon, I do not seek your charity—I cannot live forever on your bounty. I will not! But, tell me, do you think I would be wrong to act as I have resolved to do—say, would I?”

And she flashed her penetrating eyes upon his face again.

“Very wrong—if there were any possible way to avoid it!”

“Why? Tell me frankly!”

“Go to your Bible, Dolores. Don’t come to me for religious instruction.”

“No. I am no longer a Christian. I want your opinion—I know what the Bible says.”

“I have given you my opinion!”

“Yes; but your reason?”

“Well, then, because it would be cowardly; because it would be heartless; because you would have to do violence to Nature’s promptings.”

“Tell me whether you would not do the same thing rather than starve.”

“Dolores, such a step is never absolutely necessary.”

“But, putting that aside, tell me.”

“Excuse me! My code of morals may do for my own, but not for another’s government.”

“Then you mean to say that *you* would do it; but that you will not advise *me*!”

“The deed you propose is the worst of crimes!”

"What constitutes crime? When the religion that you reject is rejected by the world, what will be the standard?"

"That is not a pertinent question—you do not reject that religion!" said Vernon.

"I do, utterly!" replied Dolores solemnly.

"Then Conscience must point out the Right and Wrong! The consciences of Christian people are regulated by the precepts of their religion; my conscience is controlled by the desire to do unto the world as I would have the world do unto me. Any offence against Gospel teaching is crime in a Christian; any offence against the Golden Rule would be crime in me. Conscience is the standard!"

"My conscience would forbid me to let my children suffer; and, although my nature would shrink from the terrible deed, I think I would have the strength to meet the exigency."

"But, unless you were driven by an actual physical necessity to the commission of such a desperate act, you would not be so cruel to your children, yourself, and your friends; and while I live you shall never be justified by such an excuse. Be more hopeful, Dolores. Come; take my advice; go back to C—town; do your duty at whatever cost of feeling and pride. You owe me some gratitude, you say; well then, submit yourself to my commands. Will you do it?"

Vernon struck the right chord; Dolores melted from the stern purpose that evidently possessed her mind, and she gave her hand to her friend, saying:

"I owe you everything! If obedience can in any degree repay your generosity, I will obey!"

It was arranged the next day that Dolores should go to C—town, occupy the cottage in which Mrs. Adams and Alice lived during the war, which was still in Mrs. Adams' possession; and that she should endeavor to support herself until times should get better, she agreeing to let Roland assist her as far as he could, and to such an extent as her real needs might require.

With this purpose, in a few days, Vernon having managed to secure the means to defray her expenses, Dolores left New York

for the South, with a braver and more cheerful spirit.

Vernon had been careful not to increase her distress by communicating his suspicions in regard to Paul's new marriage; and she departed in utter ignorance of the last step of her once devotedly loved but depraved husband.

When Dolores reached C—town, she was received by Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Adams, and Alice, and carried to Rushbrook to stay until she could occupy the cottage, into which she entered about a fortnight after her arrival.

The gossips of C—town were busy from the moment of her return in circulating slanders against her character; but, as she avoided society, and as the Vernons were her warm defenders, she suffered no inconvenience from this malignity.

CHAPTER IV.

VERNON, since his settlement in New York, as the reader knows, had met with very considerable success as a writer for the press; and, although he had no practice as a lawyer, and received little encouragement to continue in his profession, he would have got along smoothly enough but for a series of unexpected events that hindered his achievement of a position of independence. It cost him only a trifle to live, but the demands on his purse from his family in the South, and the expenditure which his benefactions to Dolores required, involved him in embarrassments and ultimately plunged him into debt.

One thing and another forced him to increase the amount of this indebtedness, until he found that he was so deeply immersed that his earnings were inadequate to the regular and prompt meeting of his responsibilities and engagements, and that they must be augmented or he would soon founder.

When this fact was realized he redoubled his exertions and finished off an increased number of articles; and this led him to two discoveries—first, that he would have to

abandon his law studies and devote his entire time to writing; and, second, that he could procure no regular sale for his articles no matter how brilliantly and ably they were written—that the market for intellectual wares was glutted, and the demand not in proportion to the supply.

Roland had been away from home over twelve months when he made these discoveries, and he was getting very anxious to visit his wife and children—a desire that he would be compelled to forego until some marked improvement in his financial condition relieved him from the pressure of his obligations.

While pondering upon this subject, and endeavoring to strike upon some scheme for the improvement of his situation, the thought presented itself that perhaps he might secure permanent and constant employment on the *Herald*, to the columns of which he had been a regular contributor since his first articles for that journal, and he determined to make an application.

During a year's acquaintance with Mr. P——, the manager, that gentleman's gruffness and reserve had thawed, and Vernon was now on tolerably pleasant terms with him—sufficiently so to feel justified in soliciting his influence; and, finding him at the office and disengaged one morning when he dropped in, he approached him on the subject and was gratified at the manner in which his request was received.

Mr. P—— stated that he had no authority to make such engagements, but promised to consult Mr. Bennett, and agreed to give him encouragement or discouragement if he would call in two or three days.

Presenting himself to Mr. P——, at the expiration of the third day, Vernon was informed that Mr. Bennett would give him an interview, and an answer to his application; and that, in all probability, a favorable consideration would be given to his proposals. He sent in his card to the proprietor; and, in a few minutes, was conducted into his presence by the colored individual of the pleasant manner and injured eye.

"Take a seat, Mr. Vernon!" greeted the great journalist. "Mr. P—— has been speaking to me in your behalf."

Vernon bowed assent. The Scotchman proceeded:

"Have you ever written anything for the *Herald*?"

"I have, sir!" was the response. "Frequently, both for the *Herald* and *Telegram*."

"Ah! You are a practiced writer, Mr. P—— tells me. Let me see some of your articles, if you have any with you."

"Unfortunately I have only a few with me," answered Vernon, drawing out a memorandum book, from the pocket of which he took several printed slips. "These are inferior to some of my contributions, and, as they are not up to my average standard, I should dislike to be judged by them—they are trifles, without any depth."

Mr. Bennett took the slips—glanced at several—then his eyes twinkled, and he said pleasantly:

"Ah! So you wrote this—'The Panic of the Doctors.' A very readable thing; and it provoked a good deal of comment!"

"Yes, sir; I wrote it—but considered it a mere bagatelle."

"Yes—a bagatelle! But it struck my fancy—what were you paid for it?"

"Four dollars!"

"And how much for these?" continued the proprietor, exhibiting the papers on the 'situation' at the South—Vernon's first contributions.

"Eight dollars for this—for this six—nine for this—five for this—"

"—And you were not paid enough! A very interesting and able series of papers—much superior to the ordinary correspondence!" exclaimed the interrogator.

"Do you think," he continued, "that you could work up news from Europe into attractive letters? Have you any acquaintance with European politics?"

"Yes, sir! I am tolerably well posted, and I think I could do the work; but I should prefer not to—I will be frank, sir, I do not approve of deception!"

"Ah! You have a conscience then—a Jefferson Brick with a conscience! Ha! ha! ha!"

Vernon smiled; but was silent.

"Well—well!" continued Mr. Bennett, "I think we can employ your talents profit-

ably at something else. We will try you ; if we suit, we bargain ; if not, not."

"I am willing to undergo probation !"

"Tell me this, however—do you last well?"

"Yes, sir! I have a certain standard which I cannot excel—never do excel ; but I can keep up to it eternally. I can write twenty pages of foolscap every day, the year round. I never erase or re-write—my first trial is my best. For endurance, I acknowledge no superior!"

"A most remarkable talent—and, for an editor, the very best!" rejoined the great revolutionist of journalism. "Are you sober, industrious, steady?"

"I am!" was the confident reply.

"Well, Mr. Vernon, you may report to Mr. P—— on Monday at 12 M. He will assign your duties and announce terms. Then if you are satisfied, you can commence your trial service."

"Thank you, sir! Good morning, Mr. Bennett!"

Saying this Vernon turned and was on the point of leaving.

"Wait a moment!" called out old *Jupiter Tonans*. "P—— did not pay you enough for what you have already written—he is very close! Please hand this to the cashier."

Vernon glanced at the slip of paper. It was an order for forty dollars for extra work.

"I am not accustomed to accepting gratuities, Mr. Bennett!" the young man said with great dignity, offering to return the paper.

"You misunderstand me, sir! Mr. P—— is an employee of mine; and, in his payments for manuscripts, is governed by certain rules. Sometimes, by following those rules he pays too much; at other times he pays too little. In your case he has not paid enough, so I now purpose to make up the deficit. It is no gratuity—it is money you have justly earned. I have a right to insist that you shall take it, for we profess to pay full value for the best articles."

Mr. Bennett rose and advanced towards Vernon with the check in his hand, lending earnestness to his words by his manner; and, at length, he succeeded in inducing

the high spirited Southerner to accept the generous act of justice.

"A Bohemian gentleman, or a gentleman Bohemian! Ha! ha!" laughed the Nestor of American Bohemianism as the Carolinian left his office.

CHAPTER V.

VERNON met Courtney, on Broadway, soon after leaving the Herald office; and immediately communicated the intelligence of the favorable result of his conference with Mr. Bennett. He was surprised, however, to find that Courtney did not receive this information with that degree of interest and gratification which he had anticipated, and the indifference of his friend annoyed and perplexed him, as he could conceive no motive for this unusual indifference.

Courtney had recently been less successful in procuring purchasers for his articles, and became gradually jealous of his associate; and when he heard Vernon express his intention of seeking this situation, without considering the dishonor of such a course, he had hastened to attempt to forestall him by making a prior application. His suit, however, had met with an unfavorable reception, Mr. Bennett having rejected his propositions without considering them a moment; and hence the behavior which so puzzled his comrade.

When Vernon went to his lodgings that night, he found Courtney in a disgusting state of intoxication, and very greatly disposed to quarrel, as he always was while in that condition. Entertaining a great abhorrence of drunkenness, and yet a pity and sympathy for its unfortunate victims, Vernon could not wholly disguise his sentiments, although he held his tongue, and gave no expression to his feelings of repugnance. This policy he invariably adopted on similar occasions.

Courtney was bent, however, upon evoking some utterance of disapproval on this occasion; and greeted Vernon, when he en-

tered the room, with a spiteful look and the insulting salutation :

"You don't like my getting drunk, do you? Well, I don't care a continental damn, whether you do, or not!"

Vernon preserved a dignified reticence; but Courtnay, not to be repressed by the chilling disdain of the curled lip that made answer, continued :

"I have noticed recently that you have established a sort of censorship over my morals, and that you seem to be inclined to undertake my reformation. Now, I want you to understand that I intend to get drunk whenever I please."

Vernon's lip curled still more, and, without offering a reply, he turned on his heel.

"Why don't you answer me?" This, in a very provoking tone. "Did you hear what I said? If you don't reply, I'll fell you to the earth!"

"Courtney," said Vernon, assuming an air of lofty dignity which sat upon him as gracefully as his closely fitting coat, "you had better not provoke me to violence. You had better desist from your insolence!"

"Then, let me alone," said Courtnay, in a petulant tone, moderating under the flash of Vernon's eye; "and don't be attempting to brook me in a course that I have resolved upon. If I choose to get drunk, what business is it of yours?"

"Whether you keep drunk, or stay sober the rest of your life, is a matter of supreme indifference to me. If you were without intellect, and had no capacity for higher things, I would pity you. But when a man of brains becomes a sot, I would see him dead before I would turn on my heel to rescue him. As it is I feel a loathing scorn for you—nothing else!"

"But you shall not treat me with scorn—I will not submit to it!"

"I am master of my own emotions, and of the expression of my emotions. I shall not incommode myself to hide their expression from you, while I remain an occupant of this room. But, if it will be of any consolation to you, I will inform you that I will leave here to-morrow in extreme disgust."

"If you do I will follow you—I will——"

"You will do no such thing!"

"I swear I will! You shall not escape

me!" cried Courtnay, in a drunken glee. "If you can be contemptuous, I can still be an annoyance."

"Go to bed, you infernal ass!"

"I'll follow you; I'll annoy you; I'll——"

"Take off your clothes, sir, and retire," commanded Vernon, seizing Courtnay by each shoulder, and shaking him violently, giving that not over courageous person an acquaintance with the temper and strength that he was provoking to desperation. "Be silent too! I think another word would make me choke you—DO YOU HEAR?"

The nuisance was suddenly abated. Courtnay obeyed—his companion's eloquence was irresistible!

When perfect quiet reigned, Vernon took a seat by the little table at which he had spent so many weary hours of midnight toil, converting his best thoughts into wares, from the sale of which he supported existence. At length Courtnay snored; and then Roland drew a package of papers from his pocket, and commenced mastering their contents.

"An eventful day!" he said, after a while. "An interview with Mr. Bennett, a meeting with the strangest old woman, a row with Courtnay—I must jot it all down in my journal."

Saying this, he took up another sheet, and read it through.

"She questioned me," he proceeded, "very closely. How could she have known me, or suspected my relationship? Yet she knew father and grandfather Leigh. Who could she have been? Why did she wish me to wait until midnight before opening this package?"

After these musings, Roland spread out the rest of the documents and carefully perused them from beginning to end. When he concluded, his face wore a look of greater perplexity even than when he commenced the work of deciphering the scrawling characters of the manuscripts.

"What! Can it be so? Yes; it must be—but how can I prove the facts she relates?"

Vernon spoke excitedly, and in such a tone as to arouse Courtnay from his sleep. The drunken Bohemian, as soon as he perceived Vernon engaged in the examination of a number of mysterious looking papers,

covered up his head, leaving room to peep through, however, and then watched and listened.

"What in the world could have brought the old crone to New York from C—— town? But never mind that! Is she deceiving me? That is the question! If not, then I can yet recover. I need not attempt to trace her to her haunts—she has been keen enough to give me no clue. I must find this Jane Blount—every hope depends on her!"

Having said this, Vernon rose quietly, put the package in his coat's breast pocket, took off his clothes, and got into bed, taking care to turn his back towards Court-nay, and to get as far from him as possible, so as to avoid the fumes of liquor which he exhaled.

Court-nay simulated sleep, and waited until Vernon slumbered peacefully. Then he bounced from the bed, searched for the package, in Vernon's pocket, secured it, and hid it under the wardrobe.

Then he returned to bed.

Court-nay was malignantly drunk; but, not quite drunk enough that night. A few more drinks would have rendered him harmless; but, unfortunately, he had not taken them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next day Vernon carried his purpose of changing his quarters into execution. He failed at first to discover that the papers given him by the old crone had been abstracted from his pocket. But on the third morning following he became aware of this, and then he returned to his old boarding house with the expectation of recovering them. He suspected Court-nay of having taken them; and, when he found that the Bohemian had left on the same day with himself, he gave up all hope of getting possession of them again.

Meantime, Vernon reported to Mr. P—— on Monday morning, and was assigned to duty at one of the reportorial desks of the Herald. His compensation

was fixed at a liberal sum per month; and the anxious countenance which he had so long worn began to relax its rigidity of expression, and assumed a more cheerful and hopeful aspect.

Roland was quick in the performance of his allotted work, and his industry, exactness, and reliability gave entire satisfaction to the manager, and to the proprietor. So much so was this the case that in about a fortnight after he commenced his engagement, Mr. P—— declared that perseverance in his industry would soon achieve for him the acme of journalistic success.

With gratified ambition, Vernon wrote to his family announcing his good fortune, and exulting in a spirit of self gratification bade them look forward with certainty to the time when he would attain wealth and reputation from his new profession. He forgot that fate had marked him out for especial spite; he did not remember that his whole life had been a series of crushing disappointments; he overlooked the fact that he had several times before exulted in a budding success which never ripened.

Fortune had made a frolic of his hopes in the past! Was the unpitied Goddess about to relent? Rather, was she not inexorably resolved to blight his life with unending reverses?

A few days subsequent to the conversation with Mr. P——, which had excited his anticipations and occasioned his self-gratification, Vernon was summoned into the presence of Mr. Bennett. Without dreaming of the motive of this conference to which he was invited, the young editor hastened to attend the proprietor's commands.

"Mr. Vernon," said the old journalist, "I have received a communication respecting you from a Mr. Court-nay, in which he makes certain allegations that tend decidedly to your discredit. Mr. Court-nay gives several excellent references, and upon inquiry as to his character, I find that he is an upright and veracious person. His communications are such that I deem it absolutely necessary to say to you that your services as an *attache* of the HERALD will have to be dispensed with immediately."

"What are the allegations—in what particular does he disparage me?" asked

Vernon, calmly keeping down his indignation at the villain's calumny.

"I am not at liberty to satisfy your curiosity," replied Mr. Bennett.

"But, sir, I demand this information. I have a right to demand it, and I shall insist upon its being given me."

"I do not recognize any such right; and, to cut discussion short, I positively decline to accede to your demand!" He paused and then proceeded: "When your services were engaged they were not contracted for permanently—you came on trial, as you will remember. Therefore, strictly speaking, you are not entitled to any other compensation than for the actual term of service. But I have no disposition to act ungenerously towards you, and have determined to offer you payment for three months in advance."

"And I would see you damned before I would accept your alms!" responded Vernon, hotly, as he turned to leave.

"Wait! But for this communication from Courtney, the engagement with you would have been made permanent. Then a dismissal before the end of the year would have entitled you to a year's salary. Consequently you are more than entitled to the sum I propose to pay you, and I insist upon your taking it."

"No, sir! You must excuse me! I am slandered by an infernal villain; you hearken to his calumny; you refuse to acquaint me with its purport. Therefore, I esteem both of you to be equally base; and I cannot receive a favor at your hands, whether a mere act of justice or a simple gratuity."

"But what good would it have done for me to have informed you of the tenor of Courtney's communication?"

"If you had done so, I would have proved him to be a liar. Now, I have lost my regard for your opinion, good or bad, and it would do no good. I would not snap my finger to have your confidence."

"But, suppose it were a charge of a serious character, and it could be refuted?" rejoined Bennett.

"Bah! What difference does that make? I am conscious of the rectitude of my conduct, and the world's opinion cannot affect me in one way or another. Once I feared public reproach on matters of honor; now

that I know the world better, I despise the judgment of the vulgar mob that controls sentiment. I CONTEMN IT!"

"I have no desire to do you injustice, Mr. Vernon; and, if you think you can do so, will give you an opportunity to clear this matter up. In the meanwhile you may remain at your desk."

"You are just a little too late, Mr. Bennett. If I am a hireling, if I do have to write for pay, I still deem myself a gentleman, and must decline a further association with a person liable to be affected by the insinuations of every malignant calumniator who may entertain feelings of enmity for me. Good day, sir!"

Vernon retired; and so his connection with the HERALD was short lived.

The next letter which he sent to Rushbrook cast a damper over the blossoming hopes of its inmates. They had been promising themselves the pleasure of soon meeting the absent one, and seeing him with the furrows of care smoothed from his brow and the shadows of disappointment and distress fled from his face. This promise was now to be unrealized.

Vernon again resumed his labors as a roving journalist, and dashed off article after article and sold them at various prices, first to one paper and then to another. But, as his experience had previously taught him, this was found to be a precarious mode of subsisting, and he longed for something like permanence of occupation.

He had essayed every field of journalism but one since he had located in New York, and found each unprofitable. He had tried political writing, in which he most excelled, but found great difficulty in finding purchasers for his articles; he had tried reporting, with no better success; he had tried criticism, and it was no more remunerative, in fact he had tried and was disappointed in everything but romancing. He was combining all sorts of work, but still could not keep up with his engagements and support himself. His pen was productive, but the more work he did, the more glutted the market became and the more labor he performed for the same pay.

So his circumstances grew more desperate. At length a friend, who expressed

some interest in his condition, advised him to seek the counsel and assistance of a distinguished politician, journalist, and philanthropist, whose name is familiar in the ears of the American People.

Vernon seized the happy idea, and determined to act upon it. He made his way to Park Row, turned down that noisy thoroughfare, walked to and crossed Spruce street, which he entered. Reaching a door a few yards from the corner, he mounted the steps, went in, climbed a dingy stairway, and, at length, pulled at a bell-knob which protruded from the facing of a door on the glass of which was painted the following sign :

NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

EDITORS' ROOM.

The bell tinkled ; a porter attended the summons ; and then came the inquiry :

"Who do you desire to see, sir?"

"Mr. HORACE GREELEY!"

"He has not come down yet; and I cannot tell you whether he will be in to-day or not.—Ah! there he comes now! Mr. Greeley, this gentleman asks for you."

The philosopher of the *Tribune* ascended the steps, nodded awkwardly, and turned to Vernon.

"Wish to see me?"

"Yes, sir. I desire a few minutes' conversation, if you can spare the time."

"Walk in, sir—I can give you thirty minutes—no longer!"

Mr. Greeley led the way into a dingy-looking office; and, pointing Vernon to a seat, said, as he did so:

"Well?"

Vernon proceeded, upon receiving this intimation of his listener's readiness, to make a rapid, terse, and luminous statement; in which he informed his auditor of the length of his residence in New York, the character of his labors, the difficulties which he encountered, his present aspirations, and the motive that induced him to seek the interview.

"In a word," he concluded, "I want your advice. You are experienced, and have in-

fluence. If there is any possibility of obtaining competence from labor with the pen, you can suggest the best course. I am a Southerner, a 'rebel' of the most uncompromising kind; but, from your reputation as a philanthropist, I am assured that you will aid me with your counsel."

"My young friend," responded the Philosopher, having listened without impatience or interruption, until Vernon concluded, "I have about a thousand similar applications every week——"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Vernon.

"—— And I invariably give the same answer." This he said with a twinkle of the eye.

"You advise——?"

"—— I advise all young men from the country, who come to New York to seek fortune, to go home. If I were God Almighty I would arrange it so that every young man in the United States, who has the desire, could come to New York, live, and get rich! But I am not—unfortunately!"

"Do you think the same advice is equally good for all to whom it is given?" asked the Carolinian.

"Yes. Some follow it, and they do right; then some don't follow it, and they are right too! The weak, the vacillating, and the timid return to their homes in the country, and eat, and drink, and die, as their fathers did, in obscurity. Others stay here—the fellows of pluck, brains, endurance, ambition—and they eventually make their way to the goals of their aspiration. The fools, who go back home, think Horace Greeley is a wise old man, and they are right; the crack men, the energetic, the strong, the geniuses, who remain and succeed, have a poor opinion of my judgment, and they are wrong!"

"But in a case like mine, Mr. Greeley, where there is no choice left—what would you suggest? I am here; I can't get away; I prefer not to starve; or turn swindler; or get into prison; or into debt. Is there any way to avoid these menacing evils?"

"Can't you get regular employment?"

"Outside of writing, no!—I have tried recently. As a writer, no! I know nobody who has any influence, and none of the

papers that I write for can give me a situation—unless you can give me employment on the *Tribune*.

"No; I can't do that. I am not an editor of the *Tribune*, and have no voice in its management. I own a little stock in it—you know it belongs to a corporation!—but that is my only connection with it, except that I write articles, and they are bought and printed in its columns. Can you write trash?"

"I really don't know whether what I write is trash, or not," was the blushing response.

"Oh, I didn't mean that! Anybody can write sense; but can you write nonsense, stuff, stories, romances, nanby pamby things for the literary papers?"

"Perhaps I could; but I have never attempted anything of the kind."

"If you can write stories with plenty of sensational stuff in them, they will sell better than anything else, because there is a steadier demand for them than for solid articles—not that the pay is as good. But they must be full of startling developments and exciting mysteries, and require to be written in the best style—the market is glutted with mediocre wares."

"Would you give up the other class of writings entirely?"

"By no means! Keep all the customers you have supplied, and write these besides. Now, I think of it, you might do something for Sweetser's paper—the *Mail*. Personalities, gossip, pen-and-ink sketches—can you do that sort of work?"

"Better than anything else!"

"Then go at it! Be brilliant, pungent, and disgracefully personal, and you can't fail of winning Sweetser's favor. He needs some smart writer—the conception of his enterprise was bright, but the execution is—contemptible. HE ONLY PAYS FOUR DOLLARS A COLUMN—MINION!"

The Philosopher made this fling at the *Mail*; looked at his watch; and rose from his seat. Vernon took the hint; and prepared to leave.

"I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Greeley," said he, "for the kind suggestions which you have made. I shall endeavor to evince my appreciation by making good use of them."

"Very glad to have been able to put you on a new tack, if it will do you any good!"

Bidding the Philosopher "Good morning," Vernon departed. When he was half way down the first flight of stairs, he was halted by a call from above. Looking up towards the door, he saw Mr. Greeley standing there; and he started back.

"Never mind coming up! I only wanted to caution you to write your stories over a *nom de plume*! It will add to their mystery, and make them more popular with readers, and more saleable with publishers."

"Thank you, sir! I will bear it in mind."

And again saying "Good morning," Vernon retired.

CHAPTER VII.

VERNON'S interview with Mr. Greeley was valuable in its result, if for no other reason than the fact that it restored his cheerfulness and reanimated him with the purpose of continuing the fight with adversity.

He left the editorial rooms of the *Tribune* with the intention of thoroughly testing the worth of the suggestions which had been so unreluctantly furnished him from the fund of experience of the generous but idiosyncratic old journalist.

Vernon's experience in New York had been quite romantic, for his circumstances varying between occasional heights of good fortune and general depths of ill luck, had thrown him into contact with a number of queer people, and placed him in a number of unusual and extraordinary situations. In this way he had acquired an almost inexhaustible fund of incidents and material for his pen, upon which he could draw for illustration of his fictions, and from which he could fill the sketchy, gossipy articles that he purposed to prepare for the *Mail*.

He sought out the office of this journal, and saw its editor—Mr. Sweetser, who was formerly connected with *The Round Table*,

under his administration a pretentious sheet that prided itself on its malignant and illiberal criticisms.

He was not prepossessed with a favorable opinion of Mr. Sweetser, whom he found to be a dandy in dress and an unmitigated coxcomb in manners. Self-complacent, imagining himself a very creditable imitation of Sidney Smith, with the appearance of a Yale or Harvard graduate—the set are all alike!—this inflated personage, made vain by the encomiums of the Mutual Admiration Society, of which he was a member, presented in his looks and demeanor all the characteristics that betoken genius—of the swell-head order!

Vernon offered a couple of trifles for his examination, with a view to their publication in the *Mail*. Sweetser read them and purchased them eagerly—betraying very little more politeness, however, than was usually displayed in that brusque and ungentlemanly manner peculiar to Ahern of the *Gazette*, who could not have been more destitute of good breeding or more conspicuously without refinement, if he had been suckled and reared by a female gorilla.

Ascertaining that Mr. Sweetser would purchase such articles with some regularity and that he would pay an enormous price per column, approximating fifty cents a page of foolscap, Vernon hurried away to dispose of a *novelette* which he had written with some care and which his taste approved to be as good as most others of its class.

He left Frankfort Street on which the Mail publication office was then situated, and passed into Beekman, after walking down which he soon arrived at the *Ledger* office.

Reaching this building Roland mounted the stairs, peeped through the glass door, turned the latch, and entered and inquired for Mr. Bonner.

While waiting for an answer to this question—the clerk had to see Mr. B. before he could reply—Vernon made a critical examination of about a dozen paintings of a dark bay or brown horse, in different attitudes in each picture, which were hanging on the walls, and were stuck about elsewhere inside the establishment of the own-

er of noble Dexter. His contemplation of these portraits was disturbed by the return of the clerk, who said, with an affable smile that caused amazement (a smile is such an extraordinary thing in a New York printing office!):

“Walk in this way, sir. Mr. Bonner will see you.”

Vernon passed through an opening in the counter, and, following the direction of the clerk's finger, took two or three steps inside a door and confronted a gentleman of about five feet nine, stout, broad shouldered, well dressed, with a face that won respect, confidence, and esteem at a glance, and that was lit up by eyes that so fascinated with their rare spell that it was impossible to tell their color, but which beamed with intelligence and twinkled with good humor. This was Mr. Robert Bonner, the most agreeable journalist of the metropolis.

Vernon was motioned to a seat by Mr. Bonner; after taking which, he submitted his manuscript to the editor's perusal. Mr. Bonner glanced at the first page, then at the others quickly in succession, and with that intuitive instinct which guides the journalist in determining whether to read, or not to read, proffered contributions, made up his mind instantly.

“This seems to be of a different style from the stories usually tendered by unknown writers,” said he, “and, with your permission, I will retain the manuscript until day after to-morrow. I would like to examine it more closely than I now can.”

“Certainly, Mr. Bonner!” responded Roland. “I would exceedingly like to have it appear in the *Ledger*—the prestige would be worth a great deal to me, as you have the credit of publishing the best paper of your kind in the city. I should like to have you give it a careful examination for that reason.”

“I will. But perhaps your compliment is undeserved. Of one thing we may boast, however: we publish the most popular paper in the world. Still we are aware that all of our contributions are not what the critics term *select literature*. Nevertheless it suits the million; we print for the million!”

“I understand, sir. There is a demand

for a certain class of reading ; and you undertake to supply that demand."

"Precisely! And, consequently, we do not claim to print exclusively for persons of a severely classical, scholarly, or critical taste. For this reason, many stories of high artistic merit are declined by us—not that they are not good enough, but that they do not suit our readers. Possibly, your's may be of that character!"

"If I can secure from you the expression of such an opinion, after you have read it carefully, I shall ask the privilege of submitting something adapted to the genius of your columns. If it is adjudged to be without merit of any kind, of course I must forego the hope of gratifying that aspiration."

After much other conversation, Mr. Bonner remarked:

"It is held by some quarrelsome critics, that a moral wrong is committed in the publication of the class of literature which is generally found in the Ledger. But I hold differently. If the Ledger does not supply the demand, other papers will, for to attempt to reform public taste and to elevate the public sentiment would be the grandest of follies. Human nature is now what it always has been and always will be, and man cannot improve the Divine work. Therefore, I publish to gratify the taste that exists; but in yielding, I do not debase. On the contrary, I prevent it from being debauched by occupying the ground that others, who would have no scruples and who would exert no influence to check a tendency to depravity, would occupy if I were to abandon the field. Having the start of them, I am master of the situation, and, in a great degree, I am the arbiter of opinion in respect to these matters."

"I fully coincide with and approve of your views; and regard it as a very fortunate thing for the country that you hold the influential position which the Ledger has achieved for you."

Having concluded this interchange of opinion, Vernon and Mr. Bonner parted—the gentleman Bohemian going to his lodgings to continue his labors.

At the appointed hour Vernon presented himself a second time at the Ledger office, and was again received with great urbanity.

Since his last visit circumstances had conspired to deprive him of one of the resources upon which he had relied; and, for that reason, he was very anxious to ascertain the fate of his contribution, to get his pay for it if accepted, to attempt to make some other disposition of it if declined.

Vernon sat silently while Mr. Bonner, without speaking, looked over a number of manuscripts in search of the one which his visitor had left, all the while giving no indication for the satisfaction of the anxiety of the young writer.

"Ah! here it is!" exclaimed the editor, his eye lighting upon the pages over the lines of which the bold characters of Vernon's handwriting were distinctly traced. "It is marked 'very good, but unsuitable.' You know that we have to furnish matter specially adapted to our readers!"

"Yes. And I am to understand that this failure does not preclude me from receiving another examination, if I attempt something of the peculiar class that you print?"

"Certainly. We will take pleasure in examining anything which your own taste approves. But I may as well remark that we have piles of accepted contributions, which, for want of space, we are unable to publish. Unless there is something preeminently striking in anything new that is brought to us, we cannot promise to publish immediately."

"Oh, I will be perfectly satisfied to submit to your judgment, whatever it may be. Can you suggest a good disposition for this trifle?"

"Why, I should think almost any of the weekly literary papers would buy it. Have you ever tried to sell any of your tales to any of them? You know they do not pay very handsomely—ten dollars, or fifteen, would be a high price from most of them for such a contribution."

"I have not. This, which I have offered you, is my first effort at romancing. But tell me, why is it that the pay is so insignificant?"

"Because most of the poorer journals reprint from the English periodicals and weeklies—a most infamous piracy on the property of foreign writers and publishers,

and a serious evil as respects its effect upon American literature."

"Which fact is the best argument in favor of an International Copyright Law!"

"Precisely! But from present indications it is an abuse which in all probability will not be corrected for many years. The Publishing Interests are all allied against the proposed reformation of this evil."

At length, having trenched too much already on the courtesy of the genial journalist, Vernon left his fascinating society and set forth in pursuit of a purchaser for his story. As he made his way back to Broadway, his notice was claimed by a sign, swinging above the pavement, on which was inscribed :

OFFICE OF THE
NEW YORK ———

Vernon recollected that he had seen several copies of this publication, and remembered that its literary merits were far inferior to most of the journals that he was in the habit of reading, although the paper had some reputation as the organ of a faction of a great political party.

"If I can sell my story at all," he muttered to himself, "I cannot fail to get it off here. If they were very critical the — would be a better paper. I must get five dollars this morning, even if I can sell it for no more."

And feeling thus, Vernon passed up the step, entered the counting room, approached the clerk's desk, inquired for the editor, and was shown into a room immediately in rear.

In each corner farthest from the entrance of this *sanctum*, was a table covered with MSS., exchanges, and scraps of paper. At the table in the left corner a light complected and slightly built young man of probably thirty years, sat engaged with his pen. At the opposite table a large framed, burly, pleasant looking personage, with heavy whiskers, was similarly employed.

Nearer the door through which Vernon entered, and on the right, was another table. It was in front of an English looking individual, of foppish appearance, who was

reading aloud some lines that sounded wonderfully like doggerel. As he looked up and cried, "I flatter myself that this is the best *poem* I ever wrote," Vernon perceived that he wore very neatly trimmed mutton-chop whiskers; and, while the other editors congratulated him heartily on the beauty of his verses, saying "Capital, General — capital!" he had time to admire the poetaster's smoothly brushed brown hair which was prettily parted in the middle.

"Is the editor of the — here?" asked Vernon, as soon as the employees ceased their clatter of purchased admiration for their rhyming employer's effusion.

"Yes. Which do you want?" replied the big whiskered occupant of the right corner table.

"The one who examines manuscripts—I have a contribution to offer."

"The gentleman in the other corner will take it, sir!"

Vernon drew the manuscript from his pocket; the editor took it and glanced at the title of the story; then, after reading a page or two, seemed to be pleased.

"Will you leave it, and call again in two or three days?" (Formula!—as C. R. says.)

"Excuse me, sir! It will not take you long to read it; and, as I desire to realize on it at once, I prefer not to wait."

"I must decline to read it then!"

"I regret that I shall consequently be compelled to forego the honor of publishing in the —."

Vernon turned to leave. The editor called him back. An endeavor to overcome Vernon's objections to leaving the manuscript; and a persistence in the refusal originally made. Words! Words!

"So you positively refuse!"

"Yes. Unless you purchase now and examine afterwards."

"What is the matter?" inquired the sentimental person who loved to read his own verses aloud and who rejoiced in the facetious title of General. (The lines read on that occasion were not, "DON'T HIT HIM WHILE HE'S DOWN!") "What is the difference between you?"

The man of the left corner table gave the man of poetic aspiration and military re-

noun an account of the perverseness of the man of the manuscript.

The man of the left corner was dressed neatly but not foppishly ; the man of poetic aspiration and military renown was dressed gaudily and dandyishly ; the man of the manuscript was dressed shabbily, wore his hair long, his beard untrimmed—there remained very little resemblance, in the hairy mass of ugliness that shrouded his face and bloused the crown of his head, to the pretty golden-tressed boy of the cedar archway at Rushbrook.

The man of the poetic aspiration and military renown, when informed of the unreasonable perversity of the man of the manuscript, put his glass to his eye and looked superciliously at the offender, and, then, turning to the men of the right and left corners, observed :

"Why, of course! A person who sports such a heavy head of hair and presents such an air of genius in the carelessness of his dress deserves to get the best prices for his manuscripts before they are examined. Give him fifty dollars and take the story! Ha! ha! ha!"

Then the person of the doggerel propensity, enjoying his own delicate satire as much as he enjoyed his own "best poem," seemed to be wonderfully tickled.

Vernon had no eye-glass, but he made his hands serve the purpose. Doubling his fists, leaving an aperture between fingers and thumb, he clapped each to his eyes and leisurely contemplated the exquisitely made up popinjay who had criticised his appearance.

"Why, really!" said he, mimicking the tone of the poetaster. "One would think you could afford to be even more liberal. The nicely combed and elaborately soaped mutton-chops that adorn your blushing cheeks, and the *beautiful* brown hair, with its sweet part in the middle, that lies glued to your head, glistening with grease and smelling of sweet perfumes, proclaims your prosperity ; the clothes that you wear pronounce even in more distinct tones than your manners that you are a gentleman ; your *poetry* attests your sentiment ; while your title convinces me that you are a pearl of valor. Prosperity! *Gentility*! SENTIMENTALITY! BRAVERY! Surely, pos-

sessing these virtues, you must be the very flower of generosity! Ha! ha! ha!"

The man of the manuscript laughed a stage laugh, and threw himself into a stage attitude.

A dead silence!

The men of the right and left corners looked on and listened, and then stared with blank amazement. The personage of the Parnassus-climbing penchant turned red, white, and black.

"Leave here, sir!" he hoarsely muttered, at length, springing to his feet. "Leave this moment!"

The men of the right and left corners, in mellow accents, echoed the words of their master :

"Leave!!"

"I shall proceed to gratify you in a few seconds," responded the man of the manuscript, now losing control of his temper. "But before departing from this hospitable retreat, I feel that it is due to myself to remark that you, sir, whom these persons call General, are a contemptible blackguard ; that you are an unmanly, cowardly, despicable knave! I bid you good morning—all!"

Stung with the sense of defeat at his own game, and writhing under the denunciation of Vernon, the General, as he was called, sprang at the Carolinian, and seized him by the shoulder, and endeavored to eject him forcibly.

The fingers of Vernon's right hand instinctively clutched the throat of the assailant, and those of the left made a foray on the pretty brown hair. 'Neath the grip of the infuriate Southerner, the poetaster's eyes began to start from their sockets like pulp from a squeezed grape, and the office of the New York — came very near being the scene of its proprietor's disgraceful chastisement.

Hark!

The shuffling of four feet, and the maledictions, loud and powerful, of two voices, clashed on combatants' ears.

The men of the right and left corners rushed to the rescue of the brown-haired person who praised his own rhymes and admired his own wit. They seized the crippled knight of the manuscript ; they threw him upon the floor ; they held him,

one at each arm, in that humble position. The knight coiled up his broken leg, so as not to get it injured, and, with the other, kicked gallantly.

The poet-politician—soldier—editor, forgetting the moral of some of his own pretty lines, called "Don't Hit Him while He's Down," heroically avoided the kicking foot of the prostrate owner of the heavy head of hair, and, with a chivalric valor that put the bummers of Sherman to the eternal blush, and a sublime courage—borrowed from the example of Hunter the Malignant—sprang upon him, and banged him, and stamped him, and beat him without mercy—the men of the right and left corners holding the victim fast.

At length the soldier-poet rose; and from his lowly posture up got the tottering romanticist.

"YE DAMNED PACK OF BRUTES—YE DAMNED COWARDS—I SPIT ON YE ALL!"

He said. The General, flushed with recent victory, again started at him. The defeated Bohemian advanced to receive the attack.

"Back into your office, General!" This was said by a stout fellow, wearing a printer's paper cap, who, with several of his fellows, had just descended from the floor above, in time to witness the close of the struggle. "Back! Else we will see that this man has fair play. BACK; OR WE WILL LET HIM WHIP YOU, BY GOD!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE General stood a few seconds, as if hesitating as to his course; and then, obeying, retired to his seat.

Meanwhile, the printers surrounded Vernon and gently carried him to the door and forced him through; down the steps, and placed him standing upright on the flagstones of the pavement. When they went back up stairs, and left him, after a brief pause, he limped slowly away. His mind was full of indignant and desperate thoughts. There was a fierce gleam savagely playing from his eyes, and his thin

defiant lips were half curled in scorn, half fixed with an expression of iron resolve. The hot angry blood mantled his face with a flush of vindictive purpose.

He walked towards General Carson's office, getting more excited at each successive step. He would have affrighted his friends, had they seen him then, for he was constrained by a fury of passion, and his mind was dwelling upon deadly thoughts.

General Carson was quick to perceive this, when Vernon entered his office; and he drew him a chair close up to his table. Taking a seat here, Vernon waited a moment endeavoring to recover his calmness, and then leant over and asked, in a deep, hoarse whisper:

"Can I rely on your friendship, General? May I ask, at your hands, the best favor that one friend can demand of another?"

Without waiting to consider a moment, but seeing that something of an extraordinary nature had happened, the General heartily replied:

"Certainly, Major! Ask, and you shall receive!"

"Give me pen, ink and paper—I want to write a challenge!" was the Carolinian's fierce exclamation.

"Be patient! If you need my services, first acquaint me with the character of the difficulty which requires such a wild step for its settlement. Wait until you get cool, and do nothing rashly. Take a cigar and calm yourself!"

Vernon waved his hand impatiently, and abruptly said:

"I seek your assistance—not your counsel. My mind is made up—I have been grossly outraged—I must kill or be killed. There can be no adjustment—will you act for me?"

"Yes!" replied Carson. "Impolitely as you treat me, I will be your friend. But upon this condition: You must confide everything to me; you must give my opinion a respectful and calm hearing; you must deliberate twenty-four hours before sending a message.

"Why make these terms?"

"Never mind! I insist upon them!"

"Then wait until I smoke!" responded Vernon.

"When you have listened to me," con-

tinned General Carson, "and when, after weighing what I shall say and deliberating on it for twenty-four hours, you determine upon your course, I care not what you resolve upon, I will stick to you—I swear I will!"

"Then, here's my hand! I will accept your terms; and thank you too!"

At length, having smoked until he grew somewhat calmer, pressed by General Carson, Vernon briefly related the occurrences of the morning, and, concluding, said:

"There is but one course for me to take. I must fight—make him fight. And, by God, I will!"

"But you don't know your assailant. His name was not mentioned; he may be a person that you can't meet!" interposed Carson.

"He was an editor of the New York —; he was a rhymster; he was called General. These circumstances induce me to conclude that he was General —."

"Very true!" rejoined Carson. "The circumstances are strong. But suppose it was some one else—you should be certain before addressing your challenge! But grant that it was General —! You cannot meet him—he is not a gentleman."

"But I waive all objection. He is a man—a white man!"

"But, my friend, if he is not a gentleman, he will not fight you; if he is a coward, as his behavior to-day proves, he will not hesitate to hand your challenge to the District Attorney, and the upshot will be an introduction of principal and second to life in the Penitentiary."

"Bah! I know Oakey Hall, the District Attorney, and do not fear such a result. Hall is a man of chivalric impulses—in a word, a gentleman. His honor may be relied on under all circumstances. He would cut off his right hand before he would do an unworthy action. There is no need of apprehension that he would lend himself to such an infamous prosecution."

"Vernon, you are excited. Why it's Hall's duty to prosecute every violator of the law. What you say of him may be true, but——"

"——What I say of him is true. He belongs to a class of men which is nearly extinct in this city. He is a politician, but

not a scoundrel; an editor, but still a gentleman; a lawyer, but not a——I beg your pardon, General! You may count on such a man to do right under all circumstances. Oakey Hall is——"

"Just exactly what you have pronounced him to be, and even more! Granted, for the sake of bringing you to a point—granted! *Ergo*, when Oakey Hall's duty as a public officer comes in conflict with Oakey Hall's individual convictions or sentiments, Oakey Hall, as an honorable man, will be forced to sacrifice feeling and impulse to public duty. If you send a challenge to General —, and if I carry that challenge, as I will if you insist, Roland Vernon, Esq., late Major C. S. A., will be indicted, tried, convicted, and sentenced to a term of service in the Penitentiary. Ditto, his humble servant and friend, Joseph Carson, late Brevet Major-General U. S. A. An infernally nice termination of a pleasant little affair of honor!"

"Do you think the scoundrel would pursue that course? Do you think a soldier would decline an invitation to combat?"

"A soldier! A General without a battle—a wielder of a pen instead of the sabre. Yes, he would decline!"

"I don't understand!"

"Why, this General —, won his title with his pen as a fighting general's clerk. His *forte* is rhyming; not standing in front of blazing firearms. He is a recognized poltroon, and is destitute of honor."

"What would you do then—can he?"

"That would be better! But you would get into trouble—an aggravated assault—penitentiary offence, if the Judge should be in a bad humor. Prosecute him, or sue him for damages—he will feel that more than any other punishment you could possibly inflict."

"That is the coward's resort!" responded Vernon with a sneer.

"It is not so considered here—everybody does it! Duelling is regarded as a crime, but the redress of the law is sought by the most honorable."

"The redress of the law! What redress can the law give for injuries such as I have received? Money? Bah!"

"Then, if you will not go to the Courts for satisfaction, do nothing. If you had

money, or friends; if you could give heavy bail, when arrested, you might cane the villain. As you are poor and uninfluential, you must bear the contumely."

"I'll take your advice, General—I'll take your advice. But I'll leave New York; and go back to some North Carolina town where a *poor* gentleman may live."

CHAPTER IX.

How Dolores lived, after she took the cottage in C—town, was a mystery to the public, a mystery to her friends, and a mystery to herself. Nevertheless she did live.

Many others were without resources, having been ruined by the results of the War, and yet managed to get along, and that too with less thrift and industry than she possessed, so that it is not to be wondered at that her energy kept her beyond the reach of pressing want.

By dressmaking, millinery work; and by going out now and then as a nurse, a service for which few persons were better fitted, she acquired an income just sufficient to relieve her of the necessity of calling on her benefactor for assistance.

One day, about six months after her return to C—town, Dolores left her children in the yard at their play, and went out to carry home some work which she had finished for one of her patronesses, intending also to do certain shopping which she had deferred, for want of means, until that occasion. Among other purchases that she remembered were to be made, was some ratsbane for the purpose of exterminating certain pestiferous intruders of her pantry and storehouse.

After delivering the work, and making her other purchases, Dolores entered the drug store of Mr. Edmonds. The proprietor was engaged at the time, and William Bangs, the clerk, stepped forward to wait upon her, smiling a polite salutation.

"I am very much annoyed at home by rats, Mr. Bangs," she remarked as she approached the counter, "and I wish to purchase something to rid myself of them.

Can you suggest any poison that will serve my purpose?"

"I should think strychnine or arsenic would do. Shall I put you up some?"

"Do you think arsenic better than strychnine?" inquired Dolores.

"There is no choice between them!" was the reply.

"Then I will take arsenic!"

"How much will you have?"

"How much will do?"

"Why, I presume an ounce will be quite as much as you will want."

"Then give me an ounce!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Bangs whisked away to fill the order.

"Arsenic is a very deadly poison, isn't it, Mr. Bangs?"

Dolores asked the question while Bangs was weighing the poison.

"Indeed it is, ma'am!"

"Then can you put it up very carefully—I fear my children may get hold of it, and I shall not need to use it until to-morrow."

"Oh, certainly! I will put it in one of these empty ounce salicine bottles. I can seal it for you, if you say so? Then there will be no possible danger of the children getting at it, until you are ready for its use."

"Please do! I will be greatly obliged."

With a profound bow, Mr. Bangs proceeded to place the lady under obligations for his courtesy. He poured the arsenic from the paper in which it was weighed into the empty bottle; he corked the bottle; then he dipped the neck into a pot of hot sealing-wax, and stamped the covered cork with a die kept for such purposes:



"Thank you, madam! Just hand it to Mr. Edmonds, please!"

Then Bangs to Edmonds:

"Mrs. Ad—Vaughn" (Dolores had dropped her married and resumed her maid-

en name) "wants to pay thirty-five cents—twenty-five for an ounce of arsenic, ten for the bottle."

Dolores handed Mr. Edmonds a treasury note, and Mr. Edmonds handed Dolores the change.

"Good morning, gentlemen!"

Dolores courtesied, drew down her veil, and tripped out of the store. Then, once in the street, she hastened homewards.

As she passed the Eagle Hotel she saw a gentleman standing on the second story balcony. The sight of this person made her tremble and grow faint, but she struggled to preserve her calmness and rapidly continued her walk.

Before the door of the hotel stood a rock-away. Attached to it were a pair of large and handsome bays. Strongly strapped on the rack behind were a couple of trunks—one large, the other small. On the smaller were painted the following letters: P. A. The initials of PAUL ADAMS!

As Dolores hurried along in the direction of the cottage, this vehicle dashed by her and turned a corner of the street, going northwards. Seeing Adams, as he rode away from her, with a shudder, Dolores wrapped her shawl about her more closely and fled onwards with a quickened pace. It was the first time she had seen the man who was once her husband since they parted in New York, he with a lie on his tongue and malice in his heart, she with penitence in her breast and hope flushing her face. The sight of the scoundrel frightened her, and she was not free from apprehension until she reached home and found her children safe.

She drew a long breath of gratification, after she took them on her lap and kissed them, hugging them to her bosom as if they had been just taken and restored.

Dolores had not forgotten how Paul Adams had gone to Rochester and kidnapped them while she was in Springfield, neglecting them in waiting vainly for him to fulfill his pledges.

No wonder she was frightened; no wonder she clasped her children in her arms; no wonder she felt grateful. Grateful that they were spared to her—grateful that he had gone!

But had Paul Adams departed from C—town?

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Paul Adams passed Dolores, driving as if he was about to leave the village, he was merely playing a game. He had not intended to let her know of his presence in C—town; and when he discovered, as she went by the hotel, that she had noticed him, he was very much disconcerted. But quick in scheming, and with ready resources always, he soon struck upon the plan to recover the advantage which he had accidentally lost.

He had started from his home in Montgomery county—the home acquired by his last marriage—to meet a political committee of which he was a member at the State Capital; and, intending to travel through the country, via C—town, he had been prevailed upon by his wife to let her accompany him on the visit. She was taken sick on the road—the attack having been brought on by tight lacing and exhaustion, and he was forced to halt a day at C—town, in the hope that she would in that time get well enough to proceed.

While loitering about the town, Adams passed the drug store of Mr. Edmonds, and his eye caught sight of his deserted wife. He heard her call for arsenic, and his quick diabolical mind seized the circumstance. A scheme had long lain dormant in his brain for want of an opportunity for its execution, and now the means, the lack of which had long rendered it infeasible, were prepared for his use. Fearing that Dolores would see him, he hurried back to the hotel to ponder the probabilities of failure and success, where he spent several minutes in considering the wild project upon which he was bent, when a servant announced that his horses were at the door. He remembered that he had ordered them for a ride; but, since this enjoyment would perhaps disclose the knowledge of his presence to Dolores, he instantly determined to forego

the pleasure, and stepped upon the balcony to direct the horses and vehicle back to the stable. He saw Dolores pass just as he went out, and perceived, although he seemed not to, that she recognized him, and that he had lost his opportunity.

He was disconcerted, as has been stated; but disconcerted only for a moment. A glance at the rockaway, while hesitating, re-assured him. His trunk was still strapped on the rack. He might pass her and delude her into the belief that he was going away. He hurriedly put on a traveling duster that hung immediately within his chamber door; hastened down stairs; sprang into the vehicle; and drove by Dolores, whirling round the corner of the street that opened into the Raleigh road.

Driving a few miles into the country, and then looking at his watch, and finding that by returning slowly he could reach town after dark, he ordered the heads of his horses to be turned, and retraced his way to the hotel.

He was pleased to find when he returned that his wife was no better, and that it would be impossible for her to continue her journey on the morrow, as she was suffering intensely with sick-headache. This was fortunate for him—just what he most wanted.

After tea, he walked to Edmonds' drug store where he found Dr. McPherson, a rather recently graduated member of the Medical Faculty, lounging and in conversation with Bangs, the clerk.

"Good evening, gentlemen!" said Adams, with great blandness.

Both McPherson and Bangs were new comers within the half year; and, consequently, neither knew Adams.

"Good evening sir!" they responded.

"Can either of you refer me to a competent physician, and to a good, attentive nurse? My wife has been taken sick, and is at the hotel in need of medicine and attention."

"This is Doctor McPherson!" said Bangs, pointing to the practitioner; and then adding, in answer to the rest of the inquiry: "There is a Mrs. Vaughn in town, who sometimes goes out as a nurse, and if she's not engaged, she will do excellently

—understands the duties of a sick room to a nicety."

"Where does she live? If money is any object with her, I must have her services," said Adams with well acted show of ignorance. "Do you think she is competent, Doctor?"

"She lives on Sand Street!" replied Bangs.

"Oh, yes! I can recommend her!" answered the Doctor.

"Well, I would like to have you visit my wife and prescribe; and I will administer the medicine to-night. To-morrow I will be compelled to continue my journey; and, if you think the attack is likely to prove serious, I will ask you to employ Mrs. Vaughn or some one else, and send her up early in the morning."

The youthful Æsculapius was glad to accompany Adams, for he had few patients, and this looked as if it might turn out to be a very profitable case. Indeed, estimating the patient's husband from a humane, professional, standpoint (anti-mercenary, of course!) he appeared to be fully able to pay his bills; and *that* was a consideration.

Doctor McPherson accompanied Adams, and found the lady suffering very much from a nervous headache, but far from seriously ill. He pursued the usual course—looked at her tongue, felt her pulse, shook his head, assumed an air of wisdom, wrote a prescription, and (subsequently) pocketed a dollar.

Doctor McPherson's prescription was *secundum artem*, and read as follows:

Chloroform	3 iv.
Tinct. Camphor	3 iv.
Tinct. Card. Co.	3 ii.
Aq. Camph.	<i>ad</i> 3 iv.
M. S. Chloroform Mixture.	

Dose: A teaspoonful at intervals of two hours while suffering continues.

H. McP.

"Yes; I think you had better have Mrs. Vaughn come in the morning. This may prove a serious matter with your wife,"

said McPherson, when he handed Adams the paper on which his prescription was written.

"Is this to be administered immediately?" replied Adams, fathoming him at once, and anxious to get rid of him.

"Yes; it had better be given as soon as possible."

"Very well then; I will accompany you to the drug store, and have it prepared."

The Doctor got ready to start, but before going, went again to the bedside, and took the patient's pulse for a farewell examination.

He said: "You are quite sick, Mrs. ——"

"Trenton!" prompted Adams.

"Quite sick, Mrs. Trenton; but I hope, Mrs. Trenton, that you will be better, Mrs. Trenton, in the course of a few days. I will call again, Mrs. Trenton, in the morning."

"Curse the fool!" muttered Adams, who feared his wife would correct the physician as to her name, and that she might thereby defeat his scheme. "Curse the fool! How many times will he repeat, 'Mrs. Trenton?' I must get him away!"

Adams caught the Doctor's arm, and hurried him out of the room; and, with him walked towards Edmund's store. Here they waited a few minutes until the indefatigable Bangs put up the mixture, when they parted; Adams remarking, however, before starting back to the hotel:

"Be sure to employ the nurse to-night; and send her early in the morning."

"I will! you may rely on me!" was the reply.

Paul Adams returned to his wife, when he got the medicine, and immediately gave her a dose, saying, as he did so,

"You know, my dear, that I want you to get well, for I must be in Raleigh, day after to-morrow, in the afternoon."

"Yes, darling!" was the first response from the bed. "But I fear I will have to let you go on alone."

"If you will do that, I will come back for you, and your visit shall be made. I regret the necessity of leaving you alone, I assure you, my wife, but public business, you know!" he said, bending over and giving her a Judas' kiss.

"Yes, I know; and I would not have you

stay on my account for any consideration."

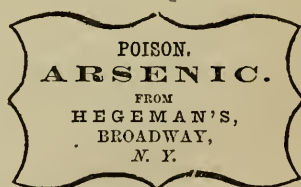
"My precious wife!" and he again kissed her. "But there is one difficulty about my going on—I cannot leave you alone! Well, there is only one competent nurse in town who goes out to strangers. She is an enemy of mine—you know this is my old home! Now, unless you will pretend to be Mrs. Trenton, instead of Mrs. Adams, she will refuse to come to you. You will have to practice a subterfuge. Will you do it, for my sake?"

"Certainly; if you wish it, Paul!"

A beam of satisfaction shot from the husband's eye; and he drew a long, silent breath of triumph. Now, if Dolores should be disengaged, and would consent to come and nurse Mrs. Trenton, as Dr. McPherson had undertaken to have her do, the last obstacle was surmounted, the victory for which he had battled, won.

Weighing the probabilities, he sat by his wife, pressing her head, and dosing her with regularity, until after midnight. Then she fell asleep, and gave evidence of profound slumber by a steady and sonorous snoring.

At length, when satisfied that there was no danger of her waking, he opened his trunk, which he had ordered to his room after his return from the country ride; and from the tray he took out a small square pasteboard box. This he opened, and from it drew forth a thick bottle of two ounces capacity, with a glass stopper. This he opened, and from it poured a whitish powder into the vial of chloroform mixture prescribed for Mrs. Adams, by Dr. McPherson. The bottle from which he poured was labeled: and the label was as follows:



Having done this, Adams restored the stopper to the bottle, the bottle to the box, the box to its place in the tray of the trunk. Then he closed the trunk, locked, and strapped it for his journey.

Adams, having undressed, walked to the mantle-piece, and looked at the mixture into which he had introduced the arsenic, and found that this ingredient had not dissolved; so he took up a pen, and, in admirable imitation of Bangs' caligraphy, wrote, "TO BE SHAKEN BEFORE EACH DOSE IS TAKEN!" on the label of vial.

Recollecting nothing else necessary to be done, Paul Adams knelt down and said his prayers, put his boots outside the door to be brushed, and then got into bed, and went as quietly to sleep by the side of the woman whose death he had just compassed, as if he had never entertained any except serenely pure and heavenly thoughts.

CHAPTER XI

ABOUT four o'clock the following morning, Adams got up and quietly dressed himself; and then, waking his wife, told her that she must remember that she was Mrs. Trenton, and under no circumstances let the nurse know or suspect her connection with himself. Then he had a servant to take his trunk down stairs and strap it on the rockaway, when he followed, after bidding his wife good-bye, and started upon his journey.

"Two birds with one stone!" he exclaimed with great exultation, as he took the reins in his hands, and, with a flourish of the whip, thrashed the horses into a sweeping trot. "Two wives gotten rid of at one stroke. A fortune and a new start in life. Tell me that 'Honesty is the best Policy!' Bah!"

If Adams had delayed his departure fifteen minutes longer, he would have been foiled in his game, for Dolores was at the hotel in a very short while after he started.

The divorced wife had no suspicion of the trick by which she was being duped. She had not heard of Paul's second marriage, although she was cognizant of the fact that he had obtained the Connecticut divorce. Never before having seen Mrs. Adams, *née* Trenton, she was an easy victim.

The hotel proprietor, and even the ser-

vants, thought very strangely of Adams' selection of a nurse, and still more strangely of the nurse; but, as it was none of their business, they did not make public their wonderment.

It so happened, also, that neither the landlord nor the doctor had any occasion to converse with one another during the period of Mrs. Adams' sickness, and, consequently, the subterfuge through which the services of Dolores were secured was not discovered.

When Dolores entered the room, she found Mrs. Adams asleep, so she sat down by a window, and watched the still, deserted streets. About six o'clock Mrs. Adams awoke, and Dolores immediately presented herself at the bedside and inquired concerning her condition.

"Oh, I feel wretchedly!" she replied, in a subdued and resigned tone. "I think I ought to take another dose of my mixture, my head is hurting me dreadfully."

Dolores offered to administer the medicine, and, while waiting to listen to the patient's enumeration of her sufferings, pressed her throbbing temples, and, with a soft and magical touch, exorcised the Demon of Pain.

"Mrs. Vaughn—I think I understood Paul to say that was your name!—I am sure that with you to care for me I shall very soon get well—your touch is so pleasant to my forehead."

"You spoke of a mixture!" said the nurse, making no direct reply. "Has the Doctor prescribed for you?"

"Yes, Dr. McPherson sent me some medicine last night."

"Then hadn't you better continue it this morning? Shall I prepare you a dose?"

"Thank you! The vial and the directions are on the mantle."

Dolores turned away to get ready the dose. In a few seconds she returned to the bed with the medicine in her hand. The sufferer was assisted to rise from a recumbent position; and the wineglass was extended to her for its contents to be gulped down. She stretched out her hand to take it, struck it, and it fell broken and jingling upon the floor.

FATE HAD PALLED THE PLOT OF THE MURDERER!

Mrs. Susan Adams was too practical to be superstitious, and Dolores was too intelligent. Consequently, this accident did not create any suspicion of foul play.

The bell was rung. A servant appeared. Another glass was ordered and brought. The mixture was taken, and the sufferer laid her head serenely upon the pillow.

Dolores then took a seat by the bedside, as before, and remained an hour performing the gentle ministrations of a sick-room angel with unremitting attentiveness. By this time Mrs. Adams complained of feeling worse, and said that her head ached more intensely and that she felt more nausea.

The nurse's arts were therefore exerted more zealously than ever, and until eight o'clock she was constantly engaged in the endeavor to afford the sufferer relief.

At eight the patient suggested that another dose of the mixture would probably afford some mitigation of her suffering. The nurse thought so too; and gave the medicine.

Instead of any visible improvement in Mrs. Adams' condition being effected, however, the pain and nausea increased so that she could not eat any breakfast.

At ten o'clock the third dose was given. Now Mrs. Adams' symptoms became so distressingly alarming that the nurse sent in haste for Doctor McPherson.

The Doctor promptly responded to the call. He found that the patient had been vomiting mucus tinged with bile, and that she complained of a burning pain in the pit of her stomach. He gave a new prescription, and left directions for a poultice to be placed on the patient's abdomen, and that one of the pills, when sent from the drug store, should be given if the nausea was relieved.

The prescription was as follows:—

R. Sub: Mur: Hyd: . . gr. x.
Pulv: Opii: gr. iss.
Mix: pil. No. II.

The patient grew no better; and, at three o'clock P. M., the physician was again called in. He found Mrs. Adams very ill, and prescribed morphine. Then, desiring consultation with an older and more expe-

rienced practitioner, he sent for Doctor Effingham.

Dr. Effingham came. He found Mrs. Adams suffering very much from thirst, great pain, a burning sensation in the pit of her stomach, and with an anxious countenance evincing great distress—besides a feeble pulse.

Dr. Effingham called Dr. McPherson aside and abruptly said:

"It is too late to do her any good. She will die!"

"Indeed! So serious, Doctor?" rejoined McPherson. "What do you attribute the——"

"——ARSENIC!"

"Good God, Doctor, you don't mean to say that she is——!"

"——Poisoned! YES!"

"Oh, my husband—my darling husband, I am dying!" screamed the poor lady, who now began to experience that sinking sensation which often precedes death, and which almost invariably gives the dying a premonition of their end. "Oh, Paul, my husband, come back—come back!"

"My dear lady!" said Dr. Effingham, approaching the sufferer and bending over the pillow, speaking in a gently modulated voice. "My dear lady, where is your husband? He shall be sent for immediately."

"He has gone to Raleigh!" she sobbed.

"Ah! that's bad—very bad!" mused the physician. "Hadm't you better send for a minister?"

"A minister?" echoed Mrs. Adams.

"Yes;—painful as the intelligence is, you cannot live!"

"Oh, my husband—my husband!" shrieked the dying woman.

"What is her husband's name?—he must be sent for, Doctor!" said Effingham, speaking hurriedly to McPherson.

"Mr. Trenton—I do not know his Christian name!"

"No, no! Not that! His name is PAUL ADAMS!"

Dolores trembled, became ghastly pale, looked at Effingham with a beseeching gaze, and then darted towards the door. She was so overwhelmed with shame and indignation at finding herself entrapped into that room that her entire demeanor conveyed an impression of guilt. Unfortu-

nate action! It immediately aroused suspicion—The very astonishment of Innocence was Ruin!

"Stop her, McPherson!" cried Effingham, when Dolores rushed towards the door. "Stop her! SHE IS THE MURDERESS!"

"Murderess? Did you say Murderess, Doctor Effingham? You lie, Sir—you know you lie!"

Saying this Dolores swept proudly by the excited physician, and went to the bedside of her husband's other wife.

"Do you believe that I am your Murderess? He says I am!"

And Dolores, addressing the dying woman, pointed to Effingham with a gesture of sublime scorn.

"No, Mrs. Vaughn! No!" was the feeble response. "Oh, my husband—my husband! I shall die without seeing my husband!"

"I fear——" said Effingham, who had lost his habitual self-command, and was now beaten by a tempest of excitement—"I fear he cannot get to you in time. You will die in a few hours—die from poison administered by the hand of Paul Adams' divorced wife."

"Paul Adams' wife?" cried Mrs. Susan Trenton Adams.

"Yes!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Where? who?" was the agonized cry.

"THERE!"

"Oh, God!" moaned the lady. "Oh! oh! oh!"

CHAPTER XII.

VERNON left General Carson's office, after the interview which terminated in his being convinced that it would be foolish to attempt to secure satisfaction for the brutal assault made upon him by the rhyming General, he was resolved upon his course.

For some time he had been wavering between an inclination to return to the South, and an indisposition to abandon an undertaking that he had essayed against the

counsel of his friends. Now he was determined to go back to C—town, and to wait patiently for the change for the better, which his father's letters predicted. Business, he had been informed, was improving, litigation was increasing, clients paying more promptly, and there was an opening at the bar.

He walked up Broadway, considering this step, and determining more and more resolutely to carry it into execution. He did not proceed very far, however, before he discovered that which his excitement had prevented him from realizing—that he had been seriously injured in his encounter with General —, and that he was growing very faint.

Suddenly the buildings whirled, the pedestrians danced in the air, hackmen, horses, wagons, drivers, omnibuses, pavements, everything in inextricable confusion circled and frolicked around his head; and he fell to the earth like a stone, heavy, lifeless, dumb. He had fainted from the exhaustion occasioned by his maltreatment.

When Vernon again became conscious, he found himself in a station house, surrounded by several policemen who were kindly watching over him, and from whom he learned that he had been brought there from the street by an officer some twenty minutes before, and that the Surgeon had been sent for to attend him.

The story of his mishap had just been concluded, when the policemen commenced to fall back from around him to make way for a visitor. A familiar voice greeted his ear, and a familiar face shone upon him. It was the Surgeon of the Station House.

"Ha! Vernon!" said this person in astonishment, as soon as he got close enough to behold the Southerner's features, "What in the world are you doing here, old fellow?"

"Why Doctor!" responded Vernon in amazement, "I really believe you are my Guardian Angel!"

"Don't talk too much! don't excite yourself!"

"I fainted in the street——"

"——Stop! Let me cure you first—don't say a word! I'll pelt you to death with inquiries when I get you well."

"Oh, as for that, I'm all right now. It's

only a fainting spell. I will be able to walk to my lodgings in a few minutes."

"No, no!" rejoined Doctor Sangster. "I'll take you home with me—I want you!"

"Then first tell me what *you* are doing here, and how long you have been in the city."

"Ever since the end of the War, I have been Surgeon of this Precinct Station."

"And I have been in the city for eighteen months, and haven't known it. O cruel Fortune!"

"Jack, please call a hack!" to a policeman. "Now, Sir, I have fairly captured you, and you must go home with me. There's no excuse!"

When the carriage arrived, Vernon accompanied Dr. Sangster home. He was cordially received by the members of his host's family, and agreeably entertained by them for several days. He soon recovered from the injuries received in his encounter with General ——, and in his fall from fainting, and, in a couple of days, was able to walk about the house without discomfort.

Doctor Sangster's duties detained him during the greater part of every day at the Station House, but in the evenings he was at home, and generally in a talkative mood, so that he and his guest had many smokes and conversations together, and became fonder than ever of each other's society.

"Now that the South has been subjugated," said the Doctor, the night before Vernon's departure for home, during one of these conversations with his friend, "tell me, what are your views of disunion, since you have had time for calm reflection?"

"My opinions are entirely unchanged, except upon one point—the South is not strong enough to assert its rights. In 1860 I thought differently."

"Then you are too proud to confess your error—too proud to acknowledge that Secession was wrong!"

"No, sir. The fact that bayonets and balls have prevented the triumph of principles that are just does not prove them to have been improperly contended for, but merely proclaims that mankind prefers error to truth. The South was right, but the South was weak: The North was wrong,

but the North was strong. Physical force, not moral worth, decided the issue of the battle."

"Then you are only waiting for another opportunity to make fight for disunion?"

"Not so! I recognize the fact that the contest for States' Rights—and States' Rights means Southern Interests—can never be effectually made again by the unaided South; I recognize the fact that the institution of slavery no longer exists, and that it can never be re-established in the United States; I recognize the fact that the dream of a Southern Nationality can never be realized, and that it would be unfortunate if the case were otherwise; and, as I am not able to leave this country, I am prepared to exchange allegiance for protection, to obey the requirements of existing authority. I have not been convinced; but I have been subjugated. I shall try to conciliate by abject submission to what I know is usurpation. I am prepared to be an unresisting slave to the many headed tyrant that rules America, except in one thing—I will not be a party to my own degradation, I will not kiss the hand that smites, I will not do violence to my conscience by professing to think that black is white."

"Then you are *loyal* but discontented!"

"I am obedient but not perjured!"

"One of your remarks struck me, Vernon—I wish you would explain it. You said that you 'recognize the fact that the dream of a Southern Nationality can never be realized, and that it would be unfortunate if the case were otherwise.' Did you mean to say that the South is better in the Union than it could be out?"

"Not precisely. I hold that the behavior of a very considerable portion of the Southern people since the end of the war proves them to be unfitted for self-government. In this, that as soon as they were defeated they commenced throwing up their hats and cheering for the victors, and evinced as much fickleness, cowardice, and depravity as even the North."

"You seem to be disgusted!"

"Disgusted! The word, were it a thousand times stronger, would be too weak and inadequate for the expression of my feelings!"

"But why is this so?"

"Why? Because defeat has taught me some impressive and disagreeable lessons. It has taught that money is power—that imbecility weaponed with wealth is too formidable an antagonist for impecunious intellect; it has taught that dishonesty is held in higher esteem by mankind than spotless virtue—that patriotism's only reward is the contempt of the cowards in whose behalf its deeds of devotion are enacted; it has taught me that success is the meed of villainy—that reputation is the meed of success."

"But why do you grumble?—'Endurance, you know, is the only achiever of good!' Why not take the world as it is, and fall into its ways?"

The Doctor laughed, as he spoke. Vernon looked him in the eye and discovered his motive for such a question.

"Now, Sangster, don't tease me! I feel what I say too earnestly—it is too true to be turned into a jest."

"Well, then, I won't! But, Vernon, I would like to know what it is that restrains a man of your religious creed, and prevents him from abandoning the paths of virtue utterly—is it a respect for the opinions of your fellows?"

"No! In all candor, out of a range of acquaintance, including at least three thousand persons, in addition to the residents of my native town, I do not know of more than twenty persons for whose esteem, confidence, good-will and opinions, I would turn on my heel. It is the internal Monitor! It is the consciousness of right, the sense of self-respect, the philanthropy that is inherent! These—the result of birth and proper home education—restrain from vice; these impel to virtue."

Vernon rose and smote his breast with his hand when he uttered this response; and then stalked up and down the floor in a frenzy of enthusiasm.

"Sir," said he, in an outburst that accompanied this action, "I agree with Sheridan's *Sir Peter Teazle*; 'This is a damned wicked world!' The poor imbecile who is dependent for happiness on else than the applause of his own conscience, is, indeed, a pitiable object. The world is so full of

rascals that just judgments are never reached. A man's own heart is the only judge that will do him impartial justice, and mete out condemnations and praises with equal fairness."

"You are bitter, Vernon!"

"No: I am severely fair! I was young and hopeful. Then I believed that 'Honesty is the best Policy.' Now, I am older and more experienced, and I believe the reverse. If I could win the consent of my instincts, I should turn villain. That maxim would no longer restrain me—it's my innate promptings that prevent, and the delightful sense of self-satisfaction."

Vernon sat down, the fever of excitement gone.

"Must you leave to-morrow? Why not stay and talk these matters over with me for at least another week? Do, old fellow!"

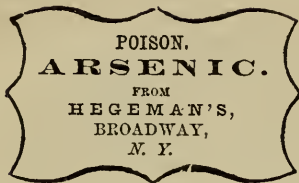
"No, Doctor. I am very thankful that you are pleased well enough with my poor company to desire to keep me; but I must go. I have a presentiment that I am needed at home!"

CHAPTER XIII.

VERNON took the cars at Jersey City, and travelled without stoppage, night or day, until he reached Raleigh. There he hired a private conveyance; and, in company with a young man named Davis, set out for C—town, having had a rest of six hours before starting.

The travellers proposed to make the journey in an afternoon and a day, and drove out from Raleigh, at a good fast trot. After riding about ten miles, they stopped on the roadside to go to a spring near by for a drink of water, and as they walked along the little footpath into the woods, Vernon's gaze was riveted by an envelope, addressed PAUL ADAMS, Esq., Swift Island, N. C. He stooped, picked it up, and walked on through the bushes towards the spring. He had taken twenty or thirty paces more, when he noticed a broken glass bottle, on

one of the pieces of which was pasted a label :



"It has done its work!" involuntarily exclaimed Vernon, in a tone loud enough for the words to reach the ears of Davis.

"What?" he asked.

"That arsenic!" said Vernon, pointing to the broken glass and its label. "Here is an envelope addressed to the man who used it."

As they passed on to the spring, Vernon added: "Davis, remember this circumstance; but say nothing about it. If I am not mistaken we shall hear of a case of poisoning ere long."

Getting the water, the travellers reseated themselves in the buggy, and drove until twilight, when they halted at a farm-house and put up for the night.

The next day they made an early start and drove on faster, travelling rapidly enough to reach C—town an hour or more before the ringing of the sundown bell.

When they entered the town they soon perceived that something unusual had happened. Knots of men and women were congregated in various places, talking vehemently, and gesticulating excitedly. The words "coroner's jury," "diabolical deed," "infamous wretch!" "she ought to be hung," uttered indignantly, indicated, as they reached the ears of the travellers, a commotion of unusual nature.

As they advanced farther into the centre of the town the crowds grew larger, and seemed to be wrought up to a higher pitch of feeling than those first encountered; and in front of the Town Hall there was an eager throng which looked as if it was waiting with impatience for some movement from the inside.

Vernon noticed all this, before he overtook any one from whom he could ascertain

the cause of all this perturbation. At length, however, he espied Jock Wright on the outskirts of the crowd.

"How are you, Jock?" he cried.

"Why, Roland! Where did you drop from—the clouds?"

"Just from New York, Jock! Tell me what all this means?"

"Ah! Then you haven't heard about it. Paul Adams' wife poisoned, and Dolores, his divorced wife, arrested on the charge of murder. Roland, I never thought her capable of such an atrocious deed!"

"Then you believe she did it!"

"Yes. Everybody does. Not a lawyer in the place will appear for her—not one!"

"My father too—he believes it?"

"No. He is out of town."

"Well, what has been done?"

"Nothing. The Magistrate's Examination is going on now. The Coroner's Jury has found a verdict—death by poison, arsenic, administered by Dolores Vaughn Adams."

"Good God! Where are the Magistrates? Be quick—tell me!"

"In there!" said Jock, pointing to the Town Hall.

Without another word, Vernon elbowed his way through the crowd, bounded up the steps, entered the hall, advanced to the table, and approached the prisoner.

"Dolores!"

She was weeping; but at the utterance of her name she looked up, recognized her friend, and cried:

"Thank God! You are here to save me again!"

"I appear for the prisoner!"

The magistrates were overwhelmed with wonder at this apparition.

"Before proceeding farther please have the testimony read—I demand this as my right!"

With an amazed glare of despair, Vernon listened to the logical and invincible chain of circumstances arrayed against Dolores. The evidence was such that the magistrates were compelled to commit her, and forced to refuse bail.

Still, Vernon knew her to be innocent. He had the proof in his pocket. But unfortunately, while it was satisfactory to his own mind, it would not convince others.

When the testimony was all taken, the order for commitment was made, and the Sheriff took possession of the body of the prisoner.

Dolores wept violently, and called upon Vernon for protection.

"I believe, I know you are innocent, Dolores," said he in response, "but you will have to go to jail. I will work night and day to secure your deliverance, to punish the guilty. Shed no tears—rely on me—you shall have justice!"

"Hang her!" "Lynch her!" cried the crowd outside.

Dolores shuddered, and wept afresh. "Don't fear them—they shall not molest you!"

"But your mother, Alice, all my friends—do they doubt me—do they believe that I murdered her? Will they desert and persecute me?"

"No! They shall believe in your innocence—they shall come to you—they shall be true women—THEY SHALL SHAME THIS ACCURSED MOB THAT IS CRYING FOR YOUR BLOOD!"

BOOK VI.



CHAPTER I.

WHEN Roland Vernon bade Dolores farewell at the prison door, and walked away towards Rushbrook to rejoin his family, from which he had been so long parted, his mind was greatly disturbed with the apprehension that they believed her to be guilty.

The death of Mrs. Adams occurred on the 29th of December, and now it was the 5th of January, and during the interval none of them had visited Dolores. If they were not affected by the public clamor that already condemned the forlorn prisoner, why had they kept away during the week of distress? This question, which he asked himself again and again, worried him all the way home; and he began to fear that he would have to stand alone in the assertion of her innocence. But these anticipations were alarming him and annoying him needlessly.

When Roland reached Rushbrook, and stood in the library with his mother and wife and mother-in-law crowding around him, while he held his youngest boy in his arms, and looked down smiling upon his eldest born, as soon as the kisses of welcome, and the greetings of affection were over, he learnt from them as a piece of news that Mrs. Adams had been poisoned, that Dolores had been arrested, that they had unfalteringly persevered in their belief of her guiltlessness, and had anxiously awaited Colonel Vernon's return to secure his permission to go to their mercilessly persecuted friend, and assure her of their continued love, their unswerving faith in her innocence.

After telling him this, Alice pleadingly said:

"I went to the Cottage the very day Dolores was arrested and brought the children away. They are here now, Roland; and I hope you will not be angry. I always loved Dolores, and, even if she is guilty, surely there can be no harm in taking care of her poor little children! Mother did not object and Ma approved—I trust you will not censure me!"

The water rushed into Roland's eyes as he bent down and drew the head of his wife up to his face; and, kissing her approvingly, he muttered:

"My noble Alice! Always dear—very dear; but now more precious than ever, because sweeter and holier in your abundant love and charity."

"Then you will not object to my going to see Dolores! You have not told us yet what you think, whether you believe that she poisoned the woman.—Please do not destroy my faith in Dolores by saying, Yes!"

"I believe her Guilty? How could you imagine such a thing possible? I have just come from her, and I promised her that you—all of you—should go to her. Will you go to-morrow?"

"Certainly we will!" quickly responded Roland's mother. "I know your father will not censure us for doing anything that you sanction."

Alice and her mother echoed Mrs. Vernon's assent.

"We have felt miserably, and have feared that Dolores would think that we intend to desert her; but then for ladies to

go alone, and brave public opinion—that would not have been proper!” added Mrs. Vernon, after it was arranged that Roland should escort them to the jail on the morrow.

The next day—Tuesday—the Vernons carried Dolores’ children with them to the prison, and were admitted to the cell of the distressed and wronged lady, introducing with them the only hope and comfort that she had experienced since the murdered woman’s last words rang in her ears.

“Ah! Let the worst come now,” sobbed Dolores, when assured of their confidence, “and I can bear my fate resignedly! Since my noble friends refuse to trust the appearances that seem to condemn me, since they do not desert me because I am unfortunate, I can brave even Death!”

“How could we for a moment falter, Dolores? You, always so tender-hearted, so womanly; I would as soon doubt Alice!” said Mrs. Vernon, warmly.

“Yes!” cried Alice, echoing the sentiment of faith so firmly expressed. “How could we, especially when Roland says he has proof that will clear you. You will be acquitted, Dolores!—Will she not, Roland?”

“I hope so, wife! But, Dolores, I will be candid—there is great danger, and you must be prepared for anything. I know facts that will acquit you, if I can prove them to the Jury. But there is the doubt. I will do all that is possible—but the arsenic that you bought from Edmonds is a stubborn circumstance.”

“I didn’t open it!” observed Dolores.

“Do you know where it is?” asked Vernon.

“Yes. In my pantry cupboard, on the top shelf, in a bottle, wrapped in brown paper. It was corked and sealed by Mr. Bangs, and the seal has never been broken.”

“Indeed! I must get it—you may yet destroy every presumption of guilt.”

“How?” eagerly asked all the ladies in one breath.

“By proving that the bottle has never been opened; which can be done by Bangs’ testimony.”

“Oh, but he’s gone!” cried Dolores. “He was frightened when I was arrested;

and, thinking that he could be punished for selling me the arsenic, he went away—to Texas, I believe!”

“How do you know this, Dolores?”

“I heard Mr. Edmonds telling Doctor Effingham that Mr. Bangs had left without any notice; and he said that he presumed that was the reason. The Doctor asked him if he knew where Mr. Bangs had gone, and he replied that he thought he had made for Texas.”

“I must have him back at any cost. He, and he only, can save your life!”

Vernon now became impatient to make further inquiries concerning Bangs, so he suggested to the ladies that they had better depart; and, promising Dolores to visit her frequently, they bade her farewell and returned to Rushbrook.

CHAPTER II.

VERNON continued to visit Dolores during her imprisonment, being accompanied very often by his wife, or mother, or the widow Adams; and thus the months of incarceration until the session of the Superior Court at which, in all probability, she would be tried, were made to glide by as pleasantly as possible to a person of Dolores’ despondent temperament.

In the meanwhile Colonel Vernon returned, reaching C—town about a week after Roland’s arrival, and, as was anticipated by his son, he entered heartily into the work of preparing the defense of the prisoner, devoting much of his time to a review of his reading in Medical Jurisprudence, to searches for decisions and the other necessary information to a thorough investigation of the law and facts of the important case which his son had undertaken and in the trial of which he was to assist.

From the declarations of Dolores, and from the statements of Roland, Col. Vernon was convinced that the proofs existed, if they could be rendered available, which would secure an acquittal of the accused; but he saw only a very poor chance of ob-

taining this evidence in time to employ it in the trial, unless a continuance of the case could be obtained. And this he feared would be impossible; inasmuch as it would be necessary to assume a great deal to be true which was uncertain, in order to make the affidavit necessary to procure such a disposition of the case when once set for trial.

Dr. Brown, who sold Adams arsenic while clerking for Hegeman, had changed his location since Roland had last met with him, and no trace of him was to be found; so that this very important rebutting circumstance could not be proved. Roland knew the same fact, but he feared that he would be prevented from testifying on the ground of a want of religious belief, and he was averse to giving an opportunity for the suggestion of such an objection to his testimony. Courtney was also cognizant of this purchase, but since his breach with Vernon, his whereabouts were unknown, and, besides, Roland apprehended that he would refuse to testify out of mere personal spite. Unless this circumstance could be established, the finding of the broken bottle on the roadside near Raleigh, and the envelope addressed to Adams, would lose significance, and the counter-presumption would fall through for want of the single link in the chain of circumstances, which Brown could prove to exist, if he could be brought to the witness stand. Therefore, Brown's absence was a serious matter to Dolores.

Then, while this chance would be thus lost, unless Bangs could be brought back to C—town, the other counter-presumption, growing out of the sealing of the bottle of arsenic purchased by Dolores, could not be rendered available.

These matters were canvassed by the Vernons, and as they were considered more fully, the despair of the lawyers intensified.

"I confess that I fear the result, my son," said Col. Vernon, when the difficulties of the case were fully realized. "I see no glimmer of hope."

"We must not despond—we must do what we can!" replied Roland.

"But what can we do? There's the trouble! If you can suggest any plan to secure the attendance of Brown or Bangs, we will obtain a verdict of acquittal easily."

"Then I say advertise for Brown in the New York papers; and advertise in Texas for Bangs."

"But, suppose they should see the advertisements, they might neither have the inclination nor the means to come," observed the Colonel.

"Oh, that I never thought of till now!" exclaimed Roland, with a start. "But if I had five thousand dollars I could overcome even that obstacle."

"How?" asked the father.

"I would place five hundred dollars in Silvertongue's hands subject to Brown's order; advertise for him in all of the prominent Eastern papers, and offer two thousand dollars reward for his attendance on the March term of our Court, and notify him to draw on Silvertongue for the means to travel here. For two thousand dollars, he could afford to come, no matter how urgent the engagements detaining him. Then I would place a like amount in the hands of some Galveston lawyer, and insert a similar advertisement in all the Texas papers, which would probably bring Bangs. A smaller sum might do; but I think five thousand dollars would make the matter certain."

"The sum must be raised!" said the Colonel, rising from his seat. "But how? I have no such amount, and no property from which it can be realized. Stop! I'll get your mother to mortgage Rushbrook!"

"But I should not like to ask her to do that for me. No, no! Some other plan must be resorted to!" replied Roland.

"For *you*! Why it's not for you. It's for Dolores—it's for Sam Vaughn's daughter. I'll ask her; I'll get the money!"

And, saying this, Col. Vernon took his hat and started homewards immediately, unwilling to delay, for a moment, a step which he hoped would result favorably for the persecuted child of his boyhood's friend.

When the Colonel stated the case to his wife, she consented without hesitation to the alienation of her homestead. It was to defend innocence, and to prove the devotion of true friendship; and Mrs. Vernon was willing to make any sacrifice for such a cause.

The money was raised without further

difficulty, and the suggestion of Roland carried out immediately.

Then the lawyers and their client waited impatiently for tidings from Brown and Bangs.

CHAPTER III

WHAT has become of Belle Woodruff? Has her lot been happy or wretched? Has she had the fruition of her hopes, or does she pine with disappointment? Did she marry Jock Wright? Or is she slumbering with the dead?

O reader! these inquiries of thine are most pertinent; and thy forbearance, if thou hast really trudged on this far without railing at the writer of these chronicles, is deeply gratifying to the editor. *He* is overwhelmed with regret and overpowered with penitence that he should have behaved so unworthily and ungallantly towards her, whose self-sacrificing love saved Vernon from insanity, and gave Alice a noble husband.

Belle still lives. Her life has been checkered with vicissitudes, some happiness, some wretchedness. In several respects the promises of young womanhood have been realized in maturity; but she is not yet the wife of jolly Jock Wright.

There at the Meadows, keeping her place at the head of her father's table, presiding over the household, as she has been accustomed to do since she lost her mother at thirteen, she lives her lonely life of maidenhood, not, however, without looking forward to a change in her condition, and wistfully waiting for the turn of Fortune's wheel, which is to enable the man to whom her promise is plighted to demand her for his wife.

There, at the Meadows, she frets and worries all day with the servants and other domestic pests; passes her time in trying to make her father as happy as he can be, now that he has to struggle with adversity, since the destruction of wealth, by the invasion of Sherman, has altered his financial state.

There, at the Meadows, sitting on the steps at evening, where in pleasanter, more joyous times she so often used to weave her innocent reveries of the future, she builds air-castles, or dreams of the past.

There, indomitable but unfortunate Jock still joins her, whispering to her in the starlight, confiding his hopes, and feeding the flame of love that he expects to illuminate his home—some of these days.

But for the War, and its accidents, Belle would long since have launched upon the uncertain sea of matrimony. But when Jock returned from his long imprisonment from which he was delivered, it will be recollected, through Vernon's influence, for certain prudential reasons, the wedding was postponed. Then the calamities of defeat intervened, and times continued to grow worse and prospects became darker, so that now they seem to be quite as far from the goal of their desires as they were five years ago. But they are not; for, despite their own apprehensions and the indications from which they judge, better luck is in store for brave, cheerful Jock Wright.

In her moments of reflection, Belle thinks upon the whole that she has been more fortunate than either Dolores or Alice, although they both got married and she is still an old maid. She has had no such sore trials as those to which they have been subjected.

As for Jock, he declares, with good-humored positiveness, that he would not change places with Roland Vernon for the world; and, now and then, just to keep his courage up, he quotes Hamlet—

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach
us,
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

General Woodruff, since the night that he and Morrisson exchanged compliments over the card-table, in the Eagle Hotel, the night that the General rushed by Judge Richards and made tracks for the Meadows, has been a perfectly temperate man, and, in a great degree, has regained, by his industry and application as a lawyer, the high standing which his dissipation had lost.

When Belle heard of the arrest of Dolores

she protested her disbelief of the foul charge against her friend, and asked her father's permission to go to her and offer sympathy, which he firmly refused to accord.

"Why, Belle, there's not a shadow of doubt of her guilt," said he, when she persisted in her request. "I have never known a more perfect connection between motive and act than is established by the circumstances of this case. She is certainly guilty; and you cannot visit a murderess!"

"But I learn that both of the Vernons think that she is innocent, and say that she is persecuted. Alice, Mrs. Vernon, and Mrs. Adams have been to see her; and I see no reason why I should not go," she replied, with great earnestness.

"Even if she *were* innocent, my daughter, there is one very good reason why *you* should not visit her—I have been retained by the relatives of the murdered lady to assist Morrisson in the prosecution. What would the world think of me, if I prosecuted a woman, who, while in jail, awaiting trial, was being visited by my own daughter?"

"Oh, father! And you are going to assist in the effort to take Dolores' life?" cried Belle with a shudder.

"No! I am going to assist in having justice done. That's all."

"But Mr. Morrisson is the State's Attorney—why do you not leave that to him. It is his duty."

"Oh, I get a large fee, and——"

"——And for the 'blood money' you will do violence to every instinct of humanity. Oh, father!"

"Just like a woman—you can never see anything in the right light. The Law commands certain things not to be done, and imposes penalties for the violation of its commands. To award these penalties when merited, courts are established. To enable courts to dispense justice, trials are ordained, and forms of trial are prescribed. Trials are for the purpose of ascertaining facts, applying the law, and pronouncing judgment. The court pronounces the judgment and is responsible. The counsel is a person skilled in the art of investigating truth, versed in a knowledge of the rules of evidence, and learned in the provisions of

the law. His duty is to assist the court by preventing the introduction of improper testimony, by exposing mistake or perjury, and by pointing out wherein the law does, and wherein it does not, apply. Their responsibility is unlike that of a court—they are only expected to employ their skill and knowledge in the examination of witnesses and in argument. The court has to do more—it has to decide what is true and what is just."

"That would be a very excellent defense of your action, but for one thing," retorted Belle.

"What's that?" inquired the General.

"It's not true!" she responded with earnestness. "The lawyer's duty is set forth fairly enough in your plea; but what is the lawyer's practice? He takes a fee, not in the interest of truth, but in the interest of his client. He contracts to pervert truth; to prostitute his skill and learning to the base purposes of vengeance, or guiltiness, or selfishness. That is the Practice, whatever may be the Theory!"

"Belle, you don't know what you are talking about—hush! One thing is settled, I assist Morrisson to prosecute; and, therefore, you must not hold any communication with that woman."

"Very well, sir! If you command, I must submit. But I don't believe that Dolores is guilty; and, if you convict her, I shall thenceforth regard you as a ——"

"—— What?" impatiently growled Woodruff.

"A very heartless man! To persecute a poor broken-hearted woman — I never thought you were so cruel!"

And Belle stole away to her chamber to hide her tears.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Spring Term of the Superior Court for the County of C——, was held at the Court House in C——town on Monday, the 17th day of March, 1868. His Honor Robert Ashe, Judge, presided.

At 11 o'clock A. M., the Judge took his seat upon the bench, and the Sheriff made proclamation.

The Grand Jury was soon empanelled ; and Judge Ashe then delivered the charge. (He will be recognized by the reader as the same Robert Ashe who commanded the F——th N. C. Troops, at Williamsburg, Sharpsburg, and elsewhere). The charge was a forcible exposition of the criminal code of the State, and was characterized by all the ability and learning of the distinguished Jurist from whose lips it fell. On the subject of Homicide it was explicit, clear, and powerful ; and very convincing to the Jury to whom it was directed.

The following bill of indictment was presented at an early hour the next morning :—

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
COUNTY OF C——.

At a Superior Court of Law begun and held for the County of C——, at the Court House in C——town, on the fifth Monday after the Second Monday in February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight.

The Jurors for the State upon their oath present, that Dolores Adams, alias Vaughn, of the county of C——, not having the fear of God before her eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil, and of her malice aforethought, contriving and intending one Susan Adams in the peace of God, and of the State, then and there being in her lifetime, to deprive of her life, and her feloniously to kill and murder, on the twenty-ninth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, with force and arms at and in the county of C—— aforesaid, did knowingly, willfully, feloniously, and of her malice aforethought, mix and mingle certain deadly poison, to wit white arsenic, in a certain medicinal preparation, to wit, Chloroform Mixture, which had been on the 28th day of December in the year aforesaid prepared for the use of the said Susan Adams, to be drunk by her the said Susan Adams, she, the said Dolores Adams, alias Vaughn, then and there well knowing that the said medicinal preparation with which she the said Dolores

Adams, alias Vaughn, did so mix and mingle the said deadly poison as aforesaid, was then and there prepared for the use of the said Susan Adams, with the intent to be then and there administered to her for her drinking the same, and the said medicinal preparation, with which the said poison was so mixed as aforesaid, afterwards, to wit, on the said twenty-ninth day of December in the year aforesaid, was placed by the said Dolores Adams, alias Vaughn, in the Eagle Hotel, a tavern in the said C——town, and county and State aforesaid, which was occupied by her, the said Susan Adams, there to be then and there drunk by her ; and the said Susan Adams (not knowing the said poison to have been mixed with the said medicinal preparation) did afterwards, to wit, on the twenty-ninth day of December, in the year aforesaid, there drink and swallow down into her body several quantities of the said poison so mixed as aforesaid with the said medicinal preparation, and the said Susan Adams of the poison aforesaid and by the operation thereof, then and there became sick and greatly distempered in her body, of which said sickness and distemper of body occasioned by the said drinking, taking and swallowing down into the body of her the said Susan Adams, of the poison aforesaid so mixed and mingled into the said medicinal preparation as aforesaid, she, the said Susan Adams, on the said twenty-ninth day of December, in the year aforesaid, on which she had so taken, drank and swallowed down the same as aforesaid, at and in the county of C—— aforesaid, did languish, and languishing did live ; on which said twenty-ninth day of December in the year aforesaid, at and in the county of C—— aforesaid, she, the said Susan Adams, of the poison aforesaid, so taken, drank, and swallowed down as aforesaid, and of the said sickness and distemper thereby occasioned, did die.

And so the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said Dolores Adams, alias Vaughn, the said Susan Adams, in manner and by the means aforesaid, feloniously, willfully, and of her malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the Peace and Dignity of the State.

MORRISON, Solicitor.

When this indictment was returned, the Solicitor rose, and requested the Court to direct the Sheriff to bring the prisoner to the bar that she might plead to the accusation.

In pursuance of this motion, Dolores was brought into Court to be arraigned, and the Clerk read the Bill of Indictment.

Upon her arraignment, Dolores pleaded Not Guilty and put herself for trial upon God and her Country.

Judge Ashe assigned Thursday for the trial of this case; whereupon Morrisson, Solicitor, moved for a special writ of *venire facias* for one hundred jurors.

Mrs. Colonel Vernon stood in the dock with Dolores when she was brought into Court; and before the scorn of her flashing eye the impudent stare of the vulgar crowd that packed the Hall of Justice was turned back and abashed.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the hour appointed for the trial, on Thursday, arrived, the court-room was jammed with a curious multitude, collected from C—— and the neighboring counties, to hear the interesting proceedings in the case of the State *vs.* Adams.

For the first time in many years the ladies of C——town were spectators and auditors of a criminal trial; while the business of the town was almost entirely suspended, that the tradespeople and citizens might be present.

At half-past ten o'clock Judge Ashe entered the hall, and immediately ordered the Sheriff to open Court. In a few minutes a Deputy of the Sheriff appeared, escorting Dolores, who, accompanied by Mrs. Vernon, took her seat in the dock.

Dolores was very pale, but collected; and stood the pert gaze of the crowd, that fell upon her in the breathless silence of that hush which her entrance commanded, with admirable self-possession.

The prosecuting officer and his assistant, and the prisoner's counsel, were within the railing that separated the members of the

legal profession from the suitors, witnesses, and other attendants upon the Court.

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said Judge Ashe, with an affable smile to the lawyers, "we will immediately proceed to the trial of the case set apart for this hour. It will probably consume a great deal of time; and, therefore, I wish to be expeditious."

"The State is ready, may it please your Honor!" said Solicitor Morrisson, rising and bowing to the Judge.

Hereupon the gaze of the whole audience was fastened upon the Vernons.

"The prisoner asks, may it please your Honor," said Col. Vernon, after whispering with his son, "that this trial may be continued until the next term of the Court. She is loath to go into this trial with so little preparation. The evidence exists which, if it could be produced, would so entirely clear up every suspicious circumstance that indicates her guilt, that she feels that she would be unjust to herself if she were to assume the unnecessary risk which would result from a failure to make this demand."

Judge Ashe.—"Upon what ground do you make the motion? Absence of material witness?"

Mr. Vernon.—"Yes, sir."

General Woodruff.—"Will brother Vernon make the necessary affidavit—that a material witness is absent—and can he promise that the witness will be in attendance upon the next term of the Court?"

Mr. Vernon.—"I cannot! It is impossible for me to say positively whether I can secure the attendance of the witness or not. I am therefore unwilling to make affidavit."

General Woodruff.—"Then the State will be compelled to insist that the trial shall proceed."

"May it please your Honor," said Mr. Roland Vernon, springing to his feet, with great excitement evinced in his manner and tone, and with a glare of indignation in his eye, "the prisoner at the bar has been persecuted with a relentless severity from the moment that the foul aspersion, which she intends to repel when a fair trial is awarded her, was made against her pure character until now. The hounds of the law"—

he pointed towards Morrisson and Woodruff—"are barking at her, thirsting for her blood, anxious to murder her in her innocence. Her case has been prejudged by the rabble, who cry for her execution with the same persistent vindictiveness that characterized the accursed Jewish mob, which demanded and obtained the crucifixion of the meek and lowly Jesus, at the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate. Now when she merely asks for a continuance of her trial, alleging that witnesses are absent, who, if they were here now, could establish her innocence, and that too from the first term of the Court after the murder of which she stands charged, the prosecutors take advantage of a mere technicality to oppose her motion. The over-zealous gentlemen who represent the State must have some less worthy motive for their haste than a proper regard for the public interests; and, if so, they should be rebuked. You sit there, may it please your Honor, not to cater to the whims of a maddened and vengeful populace, not to be a minister of persecution, but to see the majesty of the law vindicated, to hold the scales of Justice with a mercifully steady hand, to protect innocence as well as to punish crime, and it is your prerogative to exercise a high discretion in subserving those ends for which your office was created. I ask your Honor, therefore, to exercise that discretion with which you are clothed, to stand between the forlorn prisoner and her bitter and malignant oppressors, to order the continuance for which she pleads, to temper the performance of your duty with that gentleness which reflects honor upon the ermine of the upright Judge. She does not shrink from a fair trial; if she is condemned she will not fear the death penalty, but she would preserve her name from dishonor—it is all that she has to transmit to her children; for God's sake do not defraud them of their legacy under the forms of the law! Give her a fair chance to prove her innocence; it is all she asks!"

Blurring out this impolitic and impetuous speech with a fiery earnestness and with an impulsive vim in his declamation and action, having made his opponents squirm under his bold invective, the hot-headed advocate sat down amid the evi-

dences of a profound sensation in the courtroom. When he did so, his father leant over, and regretfully whispered:

"There now! What did I tell you, my son? Is that the sort of calmness you intend to display? You have spoilt our chance. You have made Woodruff and Morrisson angry, and they will not give us a continuance from courtesy; and the Judge will refuse to exercise his discretion. An older and less politic Judge might take the bit in his teeth; but Ashe will require an affidavit."

Judge Ashe.—"Well, gentleman," to Morrisson and Woodruff, "do you consent? I should be very glad to order the continuance if both sides desire it."

General Woodruff.—"We are disposed to *favor* the defence, as far as we can consistently with a sense of duty;" the General smiled blandly, and looked towards Roland Vernon; "but, although the counsel who has just addressed the Court was so kind in his references to the prosecuting officers, we cannot stretch our affability so far as to recede from the determination already expressed—a determination prompted by a due regard for the interests of the State."

CHAPTER VI.

Per Curiam.—"The motion for continuance cannot be granted, unless the defendant will show cause upon affidavit."

Mr. Vernon, Senior.—"Then the prisoner will be forced to go into the trial unprepared."

During the preliminary skirmish, thus terminated, the audience was deeply interested. Your sovereign citizen, above all things in the world, dislikes to be inveigled into the Court House by the expectation of hearing a great trial, and then to have some objection to proceeding raised by counsel, either upon motion to continue, or upon demand for removal to another county. Consequently, while the discussion lasted, the outsiders were greatly annoyed; but, when Judge Ashe made his ruling, a

smile of relief broke across many an anxious face in the group of spectators.

Several hours were consumed in selecting the jury, which was at length constituted to the satisfaction of both sides, and duly sworn and empanelled.

Now the Clerk of the Court read the bill of indictment, after which he addressed the jury as follows :

"Upon this indictment the prisoner has been arraigned, and upon her arraignment she pleaded not guilty, and for her trial has put herself upon God, and her country, which country ye are. So that your duty is to inquire whether she be guilty of the felony and murder wherewith she stands charged, or not guilty. If you find her guilty, you shall say so: if you find her not guilty you will say so, and no more. Sit together, hear the evidence, and give your verdict accordingly."

The Court, it now being two o'clock, took a recess of one hour.

As Roland Vernon entered the Court House, after dinner, the Colonel handed him a couple of letters, and inquired :

"Isn't one of those from Brown? I notice the New York postmark."

"No sir!" replied the son, after breaking the seal, and reading the epistle. "It is from Courtney, and encloses an important document—the manuscripts given me by that strange old woman!" After a pause, during which he mastered the contents of the other, he exclaimed: "This is very fortunate! Here is a reply to my advertisement for Jane Blount."

"It is very strange that we hear nothing from Brown or Bangs!" observed Colonel Vernon.

"Very! I begin to despair of either of them coming."

"Here is a letter for you, Vernon!" said General Woodruff, joining the father and son at this moment. "It got into my box by mistake, I suppose."

"Thank you, General!" And Roland tore open the envelope.

"Well?" inquired the Colonel, watching Roland's face, and observing a look of satisfaction.

This letter is from Bangs. He is in New

Orleans, and on his way. Unless detained by accident, he will be here to-morrow."

"If he comes Dolores is safe!"

As soon as the Court resumed its sitting Mr. Morrisson opened the case for the prosecution with a summary of the facts which he intended to prove. His remarks may be condensed as follows :

"I expect, may it please your Honor, and gentlemen of the Jury, to establish that the prisoner at the bar married Paul Adams in 1861; that he was divorced from her in the spring of 1867; that he married again—the second time a Miss Susan Trenton; that he brought this wife to C——town, on the 28th of December, 1867; that he stopped at the Eagle Hotel, at which place his wife was ill; that, having to proceed to Raleigh on business, he left her in the professional care of Doctor McPherson, who was instructed to employ a nurse; that his divorced wife—the prisoner at the bar, was engaged in pursuance of this instruction, and administered certain medicine while so employed; that this medicine contained arsenic, and that Mrs. Adams—the deceased—died from the doses of it which were given by the prisoner. I intend to establish that this medicine did not contain arsenic when carried from the drug store of Mr. Edmonds, at which it was prepared; and that on the 28th day of December, the prisoner purchased arsenic for the alleged purpose of exterminating rats. I shall contend that a motive for the murder existed in the fact that the deceased was the wife of the former husband of the prisoner, that an opportunity was afforded by the employment of the prisoner to nurse the deceased, and that the presumption of guilt is made so strong as to be little less than certain, in that the prisoner is known to have purchased the poison on the day previous to the murder."

When the Solicitor concluded, several witnesses were sworn without any *voir dire* examination.

Col. Vernon demanded that all the witnesses for the prosecution should leave the court-room, save the one placed upon the stand; and the prosecuting attorney consented.

"John Wright!" cried General Woodruff.

"Here!" answered Jock, walking round and taking his place upon the witness stand.

Genl. W.—"Do you know whether Paul Adams and Dolores Vaughn were married in 1861; and, if so, whether the prisoner is the Dolores Vaughn so married?"

Witness.—"Yes. Paul Adams was married to Dolores Vaughn—the prisoner—in the spring of 1861. I was present at the wedding, and acted as a groomsman."

Genl. W.—"That will do, sir. You can take the witness, gentlemen."

"Stand aside, Mr. Wright," said Col. Vernon.

"George Shyster!"

"Here!"

The gentleman from Tryon Row, New York, mounted the stand.

Genl. Woodruff.—"Were you employed by Paul Adams, as his attorney in the case of Adams against Adams—an action for divorce in the State of New York——"

"Connecticut, you mean, sir?" interrupted the witness.

"——In the State of Connecticut; and will you please state what judgment was rendered therein, if any?"

Shyster here gave a statement of his connection with the case, and established the fact of divorce. He displayed a shrewdness and genius for fabrication, in his testimony, that dazzled Vernon, who knew the truth, and discovered at once that the witness was perjuring himself. The scoundrel avoided making any communications likely to throw discredit on Adams or to bring disrepute upon himself, but recited the substance of the testimony—the perjured testimony—which was presented against Dolores on the trial for divorce. His evidence was terribly damaging, in that it utterly destroyed the reputation of the prisoner, if it was true.

"Is there any need of cross-examining him?" whispered Col. Vernon to Roland, when Shyster was tendered by Woodruff.

"Yes! Let me conduct the inquisition."

It was an inquisition that followed. Roland drove home the disgracing questions with a fearful directness; and, despite the

evasions, dodges, and lies of the unprincipled New Yorker, laid bare to the vast auditory the horrible details of the heartless scheme by which Paul Adams had put away one wife and taken another. The villain lied brazenly; but the searching depth and skillful construction of Vernon's adroitly framed questions, forced the truth from him, or compelled him to prevaricate so awkwardly, that an impression was made on the Court, jury, and auditory, which no denial of the alleged facts could destroy; and this impression was deepened and strengthened by the blank face of the perjurer, whenever he was surprised by an unexpected inquiry that developed a further intricate knowledge of his entire operations on the part of the examiner. This severe cross-examination was terminated by the following sally:

"Mr. Shyster, did you see Col. Adams after his second marriage?"

Shyster.—"I did, sir."

Vernon.—"Did you accompany him to Hegeman's drug store on the afternoon of June 24th, 1867?"

"Shyster.—I do not remember; but I think I did. I went with him to Hegeman's, one afternoon, while he and his wife were in New York."

Vernon.—"WELL, SIR, DID HE TELL YOU WHAT HE INTENDED TO DO WITH TWO OUNCES OF ARSENIC WHICH HE BOUGHT THAT AFTERNOON, AND WHY HE PRETENDED TO BE A PHYSICIAN?"

Before this trial, Vernon had never seen Shyster but once, although he was thoroughly intimate with the history of his participation in the divorce suits. Still that once was on an occasion, and under circumstances, that fixed every feature of the villain's face in his memory. It was the afternoon that Paul Adams entered Hegeman's, with a stranger, and bought arsenic. The stranger and Shyster were identical!

The witness turned pale. Adams, who was watching the proceedings with intense interest, lost his habitual self-control. The eyes of Judge, jury, and audience, were fixed upon him for a minute, and he became red and white in turn.

"Why don't you answer?" sharply asked the questioner, having given the witness time to expose his abashment.

Shyster (with a certain air of defiance, but evidently deeply agitated).—"I never saw Col. Adams purchase any arsenic, nor did he ever speak to me of any."

Vernon.—"Were you not standing close by him when he made the purchase?"

Shyster.—"Yes. I mean"—very much confused—"that is to say—I wanted to reply that I was with him at Hegeman's; but I saw him buy no arsenic, nor did I hear him call for any."

Vernon (blandly, and, with a triumphant smile of contempt, that he made tell in the jury-box).—"You can stand aside, Mr. Shyster."

This cross-examination served an excellent purpose, for it utterly destroyed the public prejudice against Dolores, and replaced it with a warm sympathy, which was the stuff he wanted to play upon in his speech.

Mr. Edmonds was next called; and by him it was established that Dolores had purchased arsenic from his store on the afternoon of the 28th of December, the day before the death of Mrs. Adams.

The Vernons did not think it necessary to cross-examine, and Doctor McPherson was put upon the stand.

The Doctor testified that he had been called in to see the deceased by Col. Adams, whom he did not then know, and was with her the night before her death; that she was introduced to him as Mrs. Trenton; that he secured the services of the prisoner as nurse for Mrs. Trenton, not himself knowing that she was in reality Mrs. Adams; that he gave a prescription composed of ingredients that would not have produced death, and which he saw prepared, and delivered, without containing arsenic, to Col. Adams; that Dolores admitted that she had given three doses from the vial in which it was sent; that he was called in to see the deceased again on the following morning, and had found her suffering more than ever, and prescribed opium and calomel, and subsequently morphine; that, in his opinion, the death had not resulted from any of the remedies administered, but that it was occasioned by poisoning from arsenic; that the contents of the vial of mixture administered by the prisoner were subjected to chemical analysis, as were the

contents of the stomach of the deceased upon a *post mortem* examination, and found to contain arsenic.

Cross-examined by Col. Vernon.—Doctor McPherson stated that he assisted at the autopsy of the deceased; that the chest and abdomen were laid open and the right lung was found adherent to the lining membrane of the chest, the left lung collapsed; that the heart was removed and afterwards examined without any disease of that organ being found; that the stomach and a portion of the smaller intestines presented decided evidences of inflammation externally; that there was no external evidence of disease of the liver, and it was not removed; that the larger intestines were pale and unusually contracted, and the bladder remarkably so; that from thirty to forty inches of the intestines were diseased. That a ligature was tied above the upper orifice of the stomach, and another at a point on the intestinal tube where the external marks of disease ceased, and that the parts included between these ligatures were removed, and, afterwards, taken to his office, opened, examined, and a high state of inflammation found in the lining coats of the stomach and intestines. That patches of erosions were discovered where the inner coat of the stomach was eaten through; and that at several points, in and around the erosions chiefly, specks of whitish matter in form of paste were found adhering to the stomach. That the contents of the stomach were received in a clean vessel and a portion of the fluid contents evaporated; that a portion of the residuum of evaporation was put into a clean Florence flask with distilled water and boiled a half hour—then filtered; that ammonio-nitrate of silver was applied to this filtered solution and a light yellow precipitate that afterwards changed to a dirty brown was obtained; that ammonio-sulphate of copper was applied to another portion of the same solution and an apple green precipitate was obtained; that, after adding a few drops of hydrochloric acid, a few pieces of bright copper were boiled in a portion of this same solution, and that this resulted in an iron-gray coating on the copper. That to a solution of known arsenic the same tests were applied with precisely similar results.

"Were those the only tests applied, Doctor?" questioned Col. Vernon.

"No, sir. Some of the white particles found in the stomach were subjected to a blow pipe heat and evolved the odor of garlic, which is indicative of arsenic."

"Well, did you make any further experiment?"

"Subsequently we took some of the suspected fluid, added water charged with sulphureted hydrogen gas, and this immediately caused a decided yellow color, which some hours afterwards resulted in a sulphur yellow precipitate. Again, a portion of the precipitate derived from the ammonio-sulphate of copper test with suspected fluid was put into a tube with a flux composed of carb. potash and charcoal and strong heat applied—a ring of iron-gray color formed near the neck of the tube, and crystals, numerous and unequivocal, were condensed on the cooler portion of the tube. The same flux and arsenic was subjected to the same experiment with the same result. Some of the same precipitate put into a platina spoon with charcoal under a blow-pipe heat, exhaled garlic odor. Afterwards some of the white substance taken from the stomach, having been received on bibulous paper, put into a test-tube with dried carb. potash and charcoal, subjected to the heat of a spirit lamp, produced a well-marked ring of an iron or steel gray color and metallic lustre. That portion of the tube on which the ring formed was cut off and placed in a large test-tube—heat again applied, and crystals in some abundance condensed on cooler portions of the tube. Into this tube distilled water was poured and boiled till the crystals dissolved. To one portion of this solution the ammonio-sulph. copper test was applied, and an apple-green precipitate was produced. To another portion, ammonio-nit. silver test was added, a light yellow precipitate, which changed to a brownish color, was produced. Sulphureted hydrogen gas was introduced into another portion, immediately causing a sulphur yellow color—no precipitate falling then, but produced afterwards by heating and acidulation."

Mr. Vernon.—"From these experiments, Doctor, are you prepared to state positively

that the deceased died from poisoning by arsenic?"

Doctor McPherson.—"Such is my opinion—but I cannot say unqualifiedly that the death was produced from no other cause."

Mr. Vernon.—"Do you regard yourself as an expert chemist—so expert as to be able to pronounce an opinion of such weight as ought to decide a question of life and death?"

Doctor McPherson.—"My experience in experimental chemistry is limited, and I do not think that my opinion in such matters should be regarded as infallible."

Mr. Vernon.—"You can stand aside, Doctor."

Doctor Effingham was the next witness for the State. He testified that he saw the deceased in the afternoon of December 29th, 1867, having been called into consultation by Dr. McPherson; that the deceased died during his visit; that she was pulseless, breathing hurriedly, had cold skin, was suffering from intense pain in the pit of her stomach, complained of a sinking feeling; and that these symptoms lasted until her death. That immediately before her death she declared herself to be the wife of Paul Adams, and when she did so, the prisoner, who was present in the capacity of nurse, attempted, with a look of great consternation, to rush from the room and appeared to be greatly confused; but that the deceased declared her belief in the innocence of the prisoner after it was suggested that she had been poisoned. The Doctor gave a detailed account of the autopsy and of the application of chemical tests to the contents of the stomach, which tallied exactly with that of Doctor McPherson; only it was also stated by Doctor Effingham that the contents of the vial labelled *Chloroform Mixture* were subjected to the same experiments with the same results. He was positive that the death resulted from poisoning and from no other cause.

Mr. Roland Vernon cross-examined this witness.

"Doctor Effingham," asked he, "what induced you to suspect the presence of arsenic?"

Doctor E.—"The symptoms described."

Vernon.—“From the symptoms alone would you have pronounced the death to be from arsenic?”

Doctor E.—“I would not. But I would have been convinced that they were caused by some irritant poison from which the death also resulted: Chloroform, or laudanum in small doses, as prescribed by Doctor McPherson, could not have produced death, or the symptoms noted.”

Vernon.—“Do you hold that the presence of arsenic can be detected infallibly?”

Doctor E.—“I do. There is no division of sentiment among Toxicologists upon this subject.”

Vernon.—“Is there any reliable test except that known as the reduction test; and, if not, did you use that?”

Doctor E.—“There is no *single* reliable test, besides the reduction test; but that was used. However, when the same fact is attested by each of the other tests used by us, when they all agree, there is no room for cavil. I have some experience as a Chemist, and do not hesitate to say that, in this case, there is no doubt!”

Vernon turned suddenly to his father, and asked in an excited whisper, his manner betraying his discomposure: “Shall I force him to refuse an answer as to religious belief? Unless Bangs comes, or this testimony is damaged, Dolores is lost!”

“It’s a bad precedent for you; but I would not hesitate,” was the ready response.

Vernon.—“Doctor Effingham, I will ask you whether you believe in the existence of a God who rewards and punishes.”

The question fell like a thunderbolt. Woodruff wilted, and sat trembling. Morrisson was not the man to be thrown off his guard, however; and he instantly sprang to his feet.

“I object to the question,” said he. “It cannot be asked now. If the witness was suspected of inadmissibility he should have been examined *voir dire*. At this stage of the proceedings, it cannot be put.”

“Mr. Starkie is of the opposite opinion,” replied Vernon. “He unequivocally says, ‘although a witness shall have taken the oath in the usual form without making any objection, he may, nevertheless, be afterwards asked whether he considers the oath

he has taken binding on his conscience.’ I put that question now, only in a more specific form.”

Per Curiam.—“Clearly, the question may be asked; and a refusal to answer, if any, may be commented upon to the jury. The Court will hear an argument, however, as to whether the witness can be compelled to answer. Upon *that* point there is a conflict of authorities, and the court prefers to hear counsel before deciding it.”

“As it is very late, may it please your Honor,” said Colonel Vernon, looking at his watch, and finding that it was seven o’clock P. M., “and as this trial must necessarily consume another day, I would suggest an adjournment until ten o’clock to-morrow morning. Such an arrangement will doubtless be satisfactory to counsel on both sides.”

“With that understanding, then, the Court will stand adjourned.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE Hall of Justice was crowded again the next day, when the sitting of the court was resumed, the interest in the trial having been intensified by the developments of the proceedings of Thursday.

Judge Ashe occupied the bench, Morrisson and Woodruff were at their places, Dolores, unaccompanied, had just entered the dock, when Mr. Roland Vernon came in with his wife on his arm, and led her to a seat by the prisoner.

“I regret to have detained the Court,” said he, as he took his place at a table within the railing; “but a sudden attack of illness prostrated my father, early this morning, and my coming was delayed. I am ready to proceed!”

The announcement that he was to conduct the trial, unaided, dreadfully disappointed that portion of the audience that had grown, since the opening, to feel a sympathy for the prisoner. Dolores, however, felt no uneasiness, for she had an exalted confidence in the young advocate’s ability.

"Has anything further been heard from Mr. Bangs?" she leaned over and asked.

"Not a word!" replied Vernon.

Dolores drew back with a tremor. The crowd noticed; and, attributing her weakness to a distrust of the lawyer, felt gloomy. The hopes of her sympathisers died out entirely.

Morrisson arose to address the Court upon the questions raised the evening previous.

"The State holds," said he, "that an absence of belief in a future state of punishment and rewards does not render a witness inadmissible, and, consequently, does not weaken the force of his testimony. This matter is settled in the case of *Shaw vs. Moore*, 4th Jones' N. C. Reports."

The crowd looked its pity for the prisoner and her counsel.

"If the Solicitor had taken the pains to comprehend the question put to the witness," retorted Mr. Vernon, "if he had waited before entering his objection to know what he was objecting to, he would have been saved the trouble of examining the decisions on a point not at issue. I asked the witness whether he believed in a *God who punishes and rewards* not necessarily in a future state, but even in this life."

Morrisson looked blank, and went to consulting with Woodruff. The confidence of the spectators in Vernon's capacity was restored.

Morrisson rose at length, and addressed the Court:

"We hold, may it please your Honor," said he, with an air of confidence, "that the question has a tendency to disgrace and render the witness infamous. In this era of Christian enlightenment, he who denies the existence of the Deity is held in just abhorrence by all those members of society who have been brought within the range of civilization, which is the pioneer and herald of religion. Such being the tendency of the question, the witness cannot be compelled to answer it. I cite the case of *Rex vs. Lewis*, in which Lord Ellenborough held that a witness is not bound to answer any question, the object of which is to disgrace or render infamous. Again, I cite the opinion of Treby, C. J., in the celebrated *Cook* case, in which he says: 'If it be an infam-

ous thing, that is enough to preserve a man from being bound to answer.' So in a number of cases, with which it is unnecessary to burden your Honor's memory, the same principle is decided."

Mr. R. Vernon.—"May it please your Honor, you have ruled that the question may be asked; you have ruled that a refusal to answer may be commented upon in the argument to the Jury; there is no doubt that the question might have been asked and required to be answered, upon an examination *voir dire*. Now, therefore, I contend that there is no reason which takes this question, after the witness has been sworn, out of the rule that requires an answer, no matter how great the tendency to disgrace and render infamous, upon the *voir dire* examination; I further contend that the principle which permits the question, and which allows comment on a refusal in the argument to the Jury (as held in the case of *State vs. Garrett*, Busbee's N. C. Reports) also compels an answer, else there is not that stern logic in the law of which it makes its boasts. Your Honor will remember that Lord Ellenborough, whose opinion in the case of *Rex vs. Lewis* has been cited, compelled a witness who had been confined in jail to answer as to that fact, and when appealed to by the witness for protection from the inquiry, said: 'If you don't answer I'll send you there'—this too in a civil action, *Frost vs. Holloway*. Again, in the case of *McBride vs. McBride*, Lord Alvanley, in his opinion, remarked: 'I will not say that a witness shall not be asked what may tend to disparage him; that would prevent an investigation into the character of the witness which it may be of importance to ascertain.' Besides, it was held in the case of *Rex vs. Edwards* that a person was bound to answer the question whether he had stood in the pillory for perjury. In conclusion I insist that no question which may be properly asked can be avoided by a refusal on the part of the witness to answer; that the answer by compulsion is the direct, logical, necessary result of the right to ask."

Per Curiam.—"The weight of English authority seems to be against the policy of compelling a witness to answer a question which has a tendency to disgrace him. In

the case of *McBride vs. McBride*, which the counsel for the prisoner has quoted, if the Court remembers accurately, the part of the decision cited was a mere qualification of the opinion of Lord Alvanley that such a question ought not to be answered. It is by no means clear that a witness may be compelled to answer even on the *voir dire* examination, but a refusal to answer would render the evidence inadmissible. But granting that a witness may be compelled in that case; there the question affects the admissibility only, here the matter of credibility is affected. Therefore, the Court will concur with Ch. Justice Treby's opinion in Cook's case, as this point has never been settled by the Supreme Court of North Carolina. It is true that in the case of the State *vs. Garrett* it is observed that it seems that a witness must answer; but that is an *obiter dictum*."

Mr. Vernon noted an exception; and directed Dr. Effingham to stand aside.

The prosecution closed its case with the proprietor of the Eagle Hotel, who established the facts that the deceased stopped at his house sick, that she was registered as Mrs. Paul Adams, that her husband left at daylight on the 29th of December, that she remained, was nursed by Mrs. Dolores Adams, and died on the afternoon of her husband's departure.

Mr. Vernon asked thirty minutes' recess that he might have time to consider whether he should introduce any evidence for the prisoner. Granted.

"If you don't bring forward very strong rebutting proof," said Judge Ashe in a low whisper as he passed Vernon on his way back to his seat upon the bench, when the half hour had expired, "your client cannot escape conviction. I never heard more conclusive circumstantial evidence—the chain is perfect!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. VERNON, for the defence, made an implicit and brief statement of the pris-

oner's case, being kept in check by the uncertainty respecting Bangs.

He perceived that everything depended upon his consuming time. If he hurried though the little proof which he could rely upon, the case would have to be closed; so he commenced a series of manœuvres for delay—known among lawyers and parliamentarians as filibusterings.

If Bangs had been present, his testimony and very little other, would have been introduced; and then the case would have been given to the jury. As it was, however, with Bangs absent, and only a ghost of a hope of his arrival in time, Vernon was compelled to rack his brain for expedients. He brought forward numbers of witnesses to immaterial facts; and, despite the inquiries of the opposing counsel as to the bearing of this and that statement, in the face of the expostulations of the Judge, who constantly interfered and sought to hurry the trial to an end, he kept up the fight for time until his hand was utterly played out.

Still Bangs did not come.

Vernon had presented an array of unnecessary evidence as to the prisoner's character, had proved innumerable circumstances that had no bearing whatever upon the question of guilt or innocence, and at last balked. His last resource was Mrs. Adams, the step-mother of Paul.

She was called; sworn; and stood in amazement waiting to be questioned.

Vernon.—"Mrs. Adams, are you acquainted with the character of Paul Adams, the husband of the deceased?"

Objection to this question was anticipated, but Vernon hoped it would open grounds for an argument; and argument, although he was certain to be overthrown, was exactly what he wanted, as it would procrastinate the proceedings.

Objection came. General Woodruff rose excitedly, and said, with great vehemence:

"The introduction of this witness is so palpably intended for delay, that the prosecution will not afford the counsel for the defence an opportunity to discuss the propriety of the question by raising formal objection; but the prosecution insists that it is the peculiar province—aye! the stern

duty—of the Court to condemn in a most peremptory manner the action of the defendant's counsel in attempting to trifle away the valuable time of this Court. The character of Adams is not a legitimate subject for investigation on this trial, as the gentleman well knows; for he is neither accused under the indictment, nor is he a witness in this cause. We have no desire, entertain no purpose, to curtail any of the rights of counsel: but he insults the intelligence of this Honorable Court by his effort to introduce extraneous matter into this trial. I hope every similar attempt will be promptly and decisively rebuked by the Court."

Mr. Vernon (rising and making a show of reply).—"May it please your honor——"

Judge Ashe.—"The Court heartily concurs with the counsel for the prosecution. Mr. Vernon will take his seat. If he intends to introduce *material* testimony, he must proceed forthwith."

Vernon, put to the wall, with a face white with despair, then called Davis, his travelling companion from Raleigh. He was sworn.

The incident of finding the envelope, and the broken arsenic bottle and label, and the time of the finding, was proved by this witness.

Now came the "tug of war." Vernon resolved to offer himself. If he could pass without an examination *voir dire* his testimony would stand with that of Effingham.

Vernon.—"Mr. Clerk, will you please swear me!"

"Stop, Mr. Vernon!" said Morrisson, with a glee that was fiendish in its triumphant sparkle—the bastard was to have a chance to retaliate on the advocate, for an insult long since delivered! "I desire to ask you a few questions before you are sworn."

Vernon (with a princely air).—"Certainly, sir."

Morrisson.—"Do you believe in a God who punishes and rewards, Mr. Vernon?"

Vernon.—"The oath which I am about to take, I hold to be binding on my conscience."

Morrisson.—"That is an evasion, sir. Answer my question!"

Vernon.—"Then to be more explicit, I

believe in a doctrine of Compensation. I know that the Code punishes Perjury. I know that Society deals its penalties against the transgressors of its Opinions. I know that infractions of the Natural Law bring punishments upon the Violators. I believe that he who tramples upon social, human and natural laws, will assuredly suffer; that he who obeys will be blessed. Knowing and believing these things, an oath, in the usual form, will be binding on my Conscience and on my Honor."

Morrisson.—"Please say, unequivocally, whether you believe that God deals out this Compensation; or whether it is a trust in Human Justice that is cherished by your Faith."

Vernon.—"If the solicitor will give me the benefit of his ideas on the somewhat profound ethical subject of the Deity's Nature, and will define with precision what the Law means by a God who punishes and rewards, I will take pleasure in answering his inquiry."

Morrisson.—"I submit, may it please your Honor, that the witness is clearly inadmissible for want of religious belief. His answer that the oath is binding on his conscience is insufficient. The law very properly holds that an infidel is not to be believed in a court of justice. The witness cannot answer my question affirmatively, or he would not have wanted other information, as to the attributes of God, than can be found in that sacred book—the book of Jehovah Himself—THE HOLY BIBLE!"

Vernon (not to be snowed under).—"Your Honor will at least permit me to argue the question of admissibility, on the ground that the oath is binding on the conscience. Chief-Justice Abbott, after delivering his opinion, in answer to the House of Lords, in the Queen's case, added——"

Per Curiam.—"—Mr. Vernon, the Court is willing to hear you; but its opinion cannot be changed by argument."

Just at this moment Vernon's eye caught sight of a face; and that face's expression induced him to yield.

Vernon.—"Of course, then," with great demureness, "I will not unnecessarily consume the valuable time of the Court."

CHAPTER IX.

FROM a position in rear of the prisoner's dock, Charles Bangs stood smirking and smiling and bowing to Vernon. He had arrived just in the nick of time; and nothing could have afforded the prisoner's counsel greater gratification than the glimpse of this witness which he caught when Judge Ashe interrupted his argument. Still the lawyer pretended not to see the man for whose presence he was to pay twenty-five hundred dollars. He became suddenly blind; and Charles Bangs continued to smirk, smile and bow, endeavoring to attract his attention.

"I am almost through!" said he to Morrisson. "You have no objection to my calling Mrs. Adams back and asking her one or two questions. One witness after that, and I close my case!"

"Of course not!" said Morrisson. "Call her back by all means."

"Mrs. Adams!"

"Here!"

"Come back to the stand, please—never mind swearing again—once is enough. Will you state to the Court and Jury if you ever saw this before," exhibiting the identical Salicine bottle that Dolores' arsenic was sealed up in by Bangs,—“and, if so, when and where; how long it was in your possession; whether it is in the same condition now that it was in when it left your possession.”

Mrs. Adams.—“I have seen it before! When I went with you to visit the prisoner, after her arrest, she told us it was in her cupboard, on the top shelf, wrapped in brown paper. I went with you to her house and found it as she said. At your request, I took it and kept it in my possession until this morning. I gave it you before coming to Court to-day. It is in the same condition now that it was in when I found it, except that it was then wrapped in brown paper and tied with a string.”

“That will do, Madam! Gentlemen, you can take the witness.”

This produced a flutter in Court. Morrisson and Woodruff bobbed their heads together and whispered. Breathless silence ensued.

At length Morrisson said: “You can stand aside, Mrs. Adams.”

During all this time Vernon had not looked towards Bangs. The prisoner seemed worried, and was apprehensive lest her counsel might close the case in ignorance of the arrival of the witness. The returned fugitive was nervous, and shared the prisoner's fear.

“CHARLES BANGS! COME TO THE BOOK AND BE SWORN!”

The witness jumped—he was startled. The prisoner's confusion vanished—She was confident now. The audience was overwhelmed with astonishment—it had not expected such a denouement.

When Bangs stepped upon the witness-stand to be sworn, Vernon got up and walked over to him, and shook his hand, and welcomed him warmly.

“This is very Fortunate!” said Vernon in a stage whisper, loud enough to be heard by the entire crowd. “If you had not come the prisoner would have been convicted. But the Innocent are always protected; Justice always Prevails!”

The examination of this witness followed.

The facts, that the bottle produced was the same that he had sold arsenic to Mrs. Adams—the prisoner—in, sealed and wrapped in brown paper; that the seal was the same that he had put upon the cork; and that, in his opinion, it had never been opened, were fully established by his testimony.

Bangs was tendered to the Solicitor.

Morrisson, who evidently believed that this testimony was suborned, was thoroughly aroused, and determined to entrap Bangs.

“When did you get here, Mr. Bangs?” he thundered, with a gaze of indignation.

“To-day!” replied the witness, meekly.

Solicitor.—“Where do you come from, sir!”

Witness.—“Texas.”

Solicitor.—“How did you come, and why?”

Witness.—“By railroad from New Orleans to Raleigh, and from there on horse back. I came to attend this Court.”

Solicitor.—“To testify in this case?”

Witness.—“Yes, sir.”

Solicitor.—“Are you related to the prisoner; and, if not, what induced the generous impulse to come as a witness for her, all the way from Texas?”

Witness.—“No, sir. I am no kin to her. I came on Mr. Vernon's account.

Solicitor.—“Why?”

Witness.—“He offered through an agent in Galveston, whose advertisement I answered, to pay my expenses and give me two thousand dollars if I reached here in time to testify in this case.”

Solicitor.—“Ah! ah! So you are to be paid for this testimony? What tale did Mr. Vernon instruct you to tell?”

Witness (indignantly).—“None, sir! I did not know which side he was on, and have only spoken to him since I came upon this stand.”

Solicitor.—(To General Woodruff, in a whisper): “I will have to try him on another tack.” (To Witness): “Well, sir, you said that you know the bottle exhibited to be the same one in which you sold, under seal, an ounce of arsenic to Mrs. Adams—the prisoner; and furthermore that the cork has not been drawn since that sale—how do you know this?”

Witness.—“By the general appearance of the bottle, the appearance of its contents, and especially by the seal.”

Solicitor.—“What peculiarity is there about the seal?”

Witness.—“It is stamped with a peculiar die.”

Solicitor.—“Which peculiar die is still at Mr. Edmond's store, and accessible to almost everybody who might want to borrow it?”

Witness.—“No, sir. It is in my pocket!”

Solicitor (with evident surprise).—“It is? And how came it there, sir?”

Witness.—“When Mrs. Adams was arrested for murder, and it leaked out that I had sold her arsenic, I was frightened and feared that I had gotten into trouble by selling the poison to her; so I determined to go to Texas. I left my knife in a drawer in one of the store counters, and went in there at night without a light to get it before starting. I got what I thought was the knife; but it turned out to be this die!”

Bangs held up the die, which he had drawn from his pocket.

Solicitor.—“When did you leave here, Mr. Bangs?”

Witness.—“About an hour after I heard of the prisoner's being taken up on suspicion—the night of the 29th of December.”

Solicitor.—“Are you certain that the impression on the seal of the bottle could not have been made by any other die? For instance, a counterfeit of this? If so, why?”

Witness.—“I am. This has a speck in the D of Edmonds—which is also on the seal.”

If frowns can be said to speak, there was a fearful malediction on Morrisson's brow when he concluded this cross-examination. Every question he had asked strengthened Bangs' story by bringing out new and important facts.

Vernon.—(To Morrisson, *sotto voce*): “I thank you, Mr. Solicitor, for your very able and effective assistance—we breathe freely now.” (To Judge Ashe): “May it please your Honor, the prisoner's case is closed here.”

“The Court will take an hour's recess for dinner!” said the Judge; and coming down from the bench, and joining the lawyers, he remarked: “Now we shall have a fair open fight between you all!”

CHAPTER X.

AT the appointed hour the session of the court was resumed. The crowd, larger than ever, and more excited, thronged in to hear the speeches.

General Woodruff led off in an argument to the jury, which occupied two hours in its delivery. The case against the accused was presented in its strongest light; the break in the chain of proof occasioned by Bangs' revelations, was skillfully and adroitly managed; the discredit cast upon Shyster's testimony by the cross-examination of Vernon was dispelled; the incident of finding the letter and label and the attempt

to connect Adams with the murder was mercilessly ridiculed; the facts against the prisoner were powerfully, logically, and compactly presented. In a word the speech was a masterly effort—the best of the General's life.

During the examination of the witnesses the prejudice against Dolores was destroyed; but General Woodruff's address restored the original unjust confidence of her guilt.

The sympathy which Vernon had anticipated, did not exist when he rose to reply. His eye met a cold, stern, un pitying gaze from the crowd—his soul sank within him for a moment—but when he commenced to speak he had suppressed all emotion.

His first words—eloquent words—like a wand, smote upon the flinty hearts of the audience, and the water gushed forth at his strokes. He stirred the depths of their feeling, and the tears flowed down their cheeks.

First, he drew a picture of female guilelessness and innocence in the bloom and loveliness of girlhood—sketched the outline with the vividness of perfect art—filled in the lights and shades, with an exquisite æstheticism—painted in graphic words scene after scene, from the life of the prisoner, causing his embodiment of female guilelessness to appear in them all, the foremost figure in each—his exordium was a panoramic view of pure and noble womanhood in all its various phases. The audience—jury, judge and all—was led by an irresistible spell to the acme of admiration and sympathy for the character which he had portrayed. Then in accents of truth, he turned and pointed to the felon's dock, and with an impressive gesture directed the undivided attention of his hearers to its weeping tenant.

"There, stricken with grief, orphaned, hopeless, despairing, sits the almost friendless—the persecuted subject of the logograph which I have so faintly presented to your imaginations. Not one tint, not one shading, not one line of the portrait but is the unexaggerated reflection of that forlorn woman's beautiful life of self-sacrifice, misfortune, and fortitude.

"I thrilled in boyhood under the magnetic spell of her beauty, hung on the melody that fell from her guileless tongue, gam-

bolled with her amid the delightful landscapes, and beneath the shades of the majestic mountains that walled her girlhood's happy home; I knew her later, when her charms matured, her powers of mind, and her capacity of feeling expanded; I watched her when the wreath of orange blossoms crowned her fair brow as she knelt at the altar with the heartless fiend who has since then so basely betrayed her confiding love; I pitied her through the years of her uncomplaining wifehood, when the lines of care, and the traces of weeping on her face revealed the story which her lips refused to relate—pitied her during the years of inhuman maltreatment which she lived with the devil who now stands behind the Solicitor, and here—even within the sacred precincts of this Temple of Justice—continues to ply the work of destruction which he commenced with a falsehood in his mouth, when he pledged her his love, honor, and protection; I found her in a distant State escaped from his baleful influence, safe from his cruelty, and, although a fugitive, and pursued by detracting slander, pure as the cherubs of heaven; I saw her, afterwards, grossly wronged—wronged too under the shield of the law—by the miscreant who has followed upon her track like a sleuth hound, and here hungers for her blood; and now I behold her again—victimized, tortured, oppressed by that villain—hooted and denounced by a demoniacal mob—the tenant of that place which has hitherto been occupied only by the vilest of the vile. But when I have seen her elsewhere she has been pure; and, gentlemen of the jury, as she was then—as she was when I knew her a joyous, laughing belle—the cynosure of a beauteous bevy of fair innocents—pure as an immaculate character, a chaste mind, a warm generous heart can make anything human, I know her to be still exalted in the possession of the holiest attributes of true womanhood—without blemish, undeserving reproach!

"But why has she been imprisoned, and brought here to this bar? Of what crime does she stand arraigned? What array of proof confronts her, and proclaims her a fit occupant of the criminal's seat?

"A woman has suddenly died; a hasty physician has denounced the nurse as a

murderess ; the populace—the fickle populace!—on the *quiver* for the horrible and sensational—taking up his cry—has shouted its anathemas against the accused woman ; dragged away from her little children, deprived of all sympathy, prejudged even by the conservative bar, and refused all counsel and assistance, she has been incarcerated within the cheerless walls of a gloomy prison, and brought thence to meet the accusation in the face of her countrymen.

“But, gentlemen of the Jury, she does not shrink from the terrible ordeal ! Conscious of her innocence—the victim of a villain’s machinations and a mob’s caprice—she has put herself on her country for trial ; you, who are that country, are to scorn the miserable prejudices arrayed for her ruin—you are to make a true deliverance according to the law and evidence. Sworn ministers of Justice, ye are!—not of passion—and I conjure you by your oaths to keep this fact in mind !”

Mr. Vernon had just concluded this exordium when a messenger from Rushbrook, breathless with excitement, came in and handed him a note. It was from his mother ! Col. Vernon was dying, and would scarcely live until his son could get home !

While Roland was reading it, another messenger came bringing a second note. His father was dead !

The young advocate paused, thought, hesitated whether to abandon his client or to resist the promptings of filial regard. The tears slowly coursed down his cheeks ; his sight was dimmed with weeping ; his brow, his face was blanched with grief.

The spectators perceived his distress ; and the silent pathos of his manner, moved many sympathetic hearts to sorrow. Still, the cause was unknown.

Roland decided. He walked to the dock where Alice sat with Dolores and sent her home to his mother. He would stay, and do his duty to the prisoner.

In a few appropriate sentences the Court and Jury were acquainted with the melancholy circumstances which had so powerfully affected him.

“But, while I am deeply depressed by this heavy calamity,” he continued, “while my faculties are thereby benumbed and I

feel both physically and mentally unequal to the great responsibility which devolves upon me at this unhappy juncture, I must not shrink—and I shall not !”

He then proceeded with great effort :

“The questions for you to determine, gentlemen of the Jury, are—*First*, Whether the death of Susan Adams was produced by poisoning with arsenic. *Second*, Whether, if so, the arsenic was administered by Dolores Adams—the prisoner at the bar. *Third*, Whether, if so, the arsenic was administered willfully, knowingly, and maliciously.”

Having stated these issues, Vernon entered into an able examination of the first, subjecting the medical testimony to a rigid review ; in which he contended that Doctor McPherson was not positive as to the cause of death, and distinctly refused to say that the *post mortem* investigations rendered the presence of arsenic in the stomach of the deceased as a thing certainly established, and argued that the whole of Doctor Effingham’s testimony must be thrown out as unworthy of credit, as that witness had tacitly admitted a want of religious belief, by refusing to answer a question touching his admissibility.

In this part of his argument the advocate displayed, by ample citation from various works of acknowledged authority upon questions of chemistry, toxicology, and medical jurisprudence, a depth of scientific and professional reading, and an extent of varied general and legal information, which took everybody by storm.

Upon the issue as to who administered the arsenic, he showed that the prisoner’s consternation and attempt to rush from the room was no indication of her guilt, but that it should be attributed to another motive—her astonishment and indignation at having been entrapped into so humiliating a position by the artifices of her former husband ; and then he dwelt upon the indisputable proof that the arsenic which she had purchased from Edmond’s store had never been used.

But, granting both of the issues already discussed, for the sake of argument, he proceeded to the discussion of the last—whether, if she had administered arsenic, it was given willfully, knowingly, and malicious-

ly. In this discussion the highest powers of the advocate were elicited.

As to the motive, he took up the question of her marriage and divorce, admitted the facts, and then skillfully commented, utterly destroying every suspicion of malice, by proving from Shyster's testimony that she had never been notified of the Connecticut divorce, and establishing by the testimony of Doctor McPherson that she not only appeared to be ignorant of the identity of the deceased, but that she had reason to be, from the statement given her by him when he employed her.

Having destroyed the presumption of a motive, the facts brought out from Bangs were again alluded to and impressed in a forcible review of his revelations; and the position that, if a motive had existed, the means had not, was assumed and strongly urged.

In conclusion he recapitulated; firstly, contending that there was *no proof* of the presence of arsenic in the stomach of the deceased, and that she did not die from poison; secondly, contending that there was no evidence that the prisoner administered the poison; thirdly, contending that there was no malice in the heart of the prisoner to instigate the murder.

"But if the Jury is satisfied that the death did result from arsenic," he said, "and that the prisoner did administer the arsenic, and are in doubt upon the last issue, namely, whether the prisoner was instigated by malice, and gave the poison willfully and knowingly; if it is held that a murder has been committed, that the prisoner was the instrument of that murder, and if a doubt that exists as to her complicity may be removed by a hypothesis which will suppose her to have been the victim of another's schemings, such an hypothesis will be eliminated from the evidence presented in this trial.

"The husband of the deceased, by her will, inherited her entire property; that property is large—there is a motive! The cross-examination of the witness, Shyster, produced an impression, although it did not establish, that the husband bought arsenic, of Hegeman's clerk, in June, 1867; the same cross-examination proves the husband to have been guilty of an action of such un-

natural depravity as to justify the confidence that he is capable of any crime, no matter how atrocious; the testimony of Davis, which attests that a bottle of arsenic, corresponding in description with that alleged to have been bought by the husband, was found broken and lying near a letter addressed to the husband, at a time when that husband is known to have recently been in the locality where these damning proofs were found, connects this motive, this alleged purchase, and the death connects these circumstances logically, powerfully."

The advocate paused a moment; fixed his penetrating gaze upon Adams, who was standing behind the solicitor's chair; and then advanced towards the position that he occupied.

"If there has been murder, gentlemen of the jury," said he, as he advanced his bright, cutting, remorseless eye, flashing its indignation in withering glances that blasted like the fearful strokes of the lightning of heaven—"if there has been murder done, the murderer does not sit in yonder felon's dock, but he stands *there*! *THERE*! *THERE*!"

Adams recoiled as Vernon approached. Every lineament of his face confessed guilt. He trembled; and great drops of perspiration curdled upon his Cain-marked brow.

Vernon seized the occasion. He turned, and, in a voice of thunder roared:

"RISE UP, O JUDGE! RISE, YE HONEST JURYMEN! RISE, AND MARK THE CONFESSION OF YONDER INFAMOUS WRETCH! RISE AND BEHOLD THE MURDERER!"

The whole audience rushed to look. Even the Judge, startled out of his usual dignity, sprang to his feet. Ten of the jurymen—two were packed after Vernon's peremptory challenges were exhausted—obeyed the advocate's command. The Sheriff vainly endeavored to preserve decorum.

"Yes, gentlemen of the jury," continued Vernon, "he is the murderer. He has put away one wife by divorce. He has put away another by poison! If I live and continue to enjoy the exercise of my faculties, I will see that justice is done—I know that the proof exists—I have the clue which

will enable me to procure that proof—and, as I am an honest man, I will not rest until his iniquity receives its penalty! Tremble wretch—tremble! Your doom is written! THE BONDS OF THE PRISONER WILL BE LOOSENED—THE RIGHT WILL PREVAIL!”

If the verdict had been taken when Vernon sat down, not a juryman would have dared to say Guilty. Even the two packed hirelings, suborned with Paul Adams' money, would have been forced to vote for acquittal.

It seemed that, at length, Vernon's confidence that “Honesty triumphs: villainy is punished,” was to be vindicated.

So thinks the reader? Be not too quick, O enthusiast! Wait!

Morrisson rose to reply. Every one was astonished. Woodruff even, was heard to whisper, “Hadrn't we better give him the verdict without further contest?”

Morrisson was up. The old lawyer intended to speak. And he did speak.

(The reader will please forbear the sneer at Morrisson's expense. He was a drunkard; but he had a peculiarity: he had a wonderful power of recuperation; and, although he was weak and silly, and sophomoric in his expressions, when not blackguardish, as he was generally, while under the influence of liquor, when sober his mind was strong, clear, grasping, and never impaired by the effects of his debauchery. He was a drunkard; but he had another peculiarity: he never attempted to try a case unless while perfectly sober. Hitherto the reader has seen Mr. Morrisson during his debauches—now, indeed, throughout this trial—the reader sees and has seen Mr. Morrisson intensely sober.)

The speech was very lengthy. Thirty minutes were consumed in a dry, dull, seemingly foolish exordium; but in that thirty minutes he managed to *bore* the recollection of Vernon's splendid eloquence, and the effect of Vernon's first-rate acting, out of the minds of the jurymen. Then he commenced in earnest.

He vindicated the prosecution from the assaults of Vernon, and reminded his audience that he was a sworn officer of the law, compelled by obligations of duty to bring criminals to the bar of justice for

trial, and to deal with all offenders and alleged offenders with inexorable mercilessness. He contended that a good, substantial motive, on the part of the accused, for the commission of the murder, had been established; that the very outrages which she had suffered at Paul Adams' instance, as brought to their attention by the cross-examination of Shyster, made that motive all the more powerful. He said that it was the State, and not Paul Adams, that was prosecuting, and, consequently, that the facts implicating him, in cruelty to his wife, except so far as they strengthened her motive for the deed with which she was charged, were foreign to the issue being tried.

Next, he met Vernon on his own ground, and overthrew the “flimsy argument of this pretentious adversary,” (his words!) by proving, beyond cavil, with full quotations from the highest authorities, that the facts related in regard to the chemical tests and their results in the testimony of Doctor McPherson, established the presence of arsenic—sustaining Doctor Effingham's opinions by profuse quotations from the highest authorities.

In proof of the allegation that the arsenic was administered by the prisoner, he reminded the Jury that the contents of the vial of Chloroform Mixture were proved to have been impregnated with arsenic, and that she had confessed to having administered three doses.

Lastly, he grappled with the remaining issue—the only doubtful one: Whether the prisoner, she having administered the arsenic, did so willfully, knowingly, and maliciously. Here he claimed that he had established the others, and had proved a motive; and reasoning from this proposition, he urged that the purchase of the arsenic from Bangs was a part of a scheme to shield her from punishment—that the arsenic with which she really poisoned the deceased had been purchased weeks before—and that the Bangs denouement was a prepared artifice very creditable to her ingenuity. Then he ridiculed Vernon's attack on Adams, suggested that the young advocate should try the stage and take to tragedy. (Old wit, Morrisson—very old!) attributed Adams' paleness and excitement

to indignation, painted the scene in the death chamber between the deceased and her physicians, spoke of her tender cries and entreaties for her husband's return, dwelt upon the deep love that existed between them as attested by her will, and pictured Paul's grief and despair when he heard of her death. Then flourish about the necessity of checking crime and setting an example to evil-doers; flourish about "your duty as sworn men;" flourish about not wishing to have the innocent punished, and merciful quotation about ninety and nine guilty escaping, etc.; grand flourish about his certainty that this particular prisoner was guilty.

Bob! into his seat went Morrisson; out came his red silk pocket handkerchief; and blow! blow! blow! snorted his nose.

Woodruff picked up a little and began to hope that there was some chance left, after all, of getting his contingent fee. Vernon dropped down a little, and began to get uneasy. Crowd somewhat mixed. Jury ditto. Prisoner calm. Judge clear.

His Honor delivered a lucid, impartial charge. He concluded as follows:

"To fix Guilt by Circumstantial Evidence, such as has been presented in this case, even granting every alleged circumstance to be true, it must be of that strong presumptive character which excludes every *reasonable* hypothesis of Innocence—so convincing that no additional circumstances can alter the conclusion reached.

"It remains for you to say whether all of the *res geste* have been brought out in this trial, and whether all of the issues have been affirmed by the proof. If you are in doubt *as to the cause of the death*; or, *as to who administered the arsenic*, if you hold that death resulted from that cause; or, *as to a willful, knowing, and malicious giving of arsenic*, if you hold that death was produced by poison given by the prisoner, you will render a verdict of Not Guilty."

The Court was adjourned for the day.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN the Jury retired, Vernon left the Court-Room hurriedly.

There was Grief at Rushbrook—Grief which he shared too deeply for its expression in tears or its utterance in lamentations. Thither he bent his steps, not walking, not running, but flying to his mother's side—himself deeply afflicted, but going to carry comfort, consolation.

The distressed son stood in the library the next morning gazing at the corpse of the departed father which lay there clad for the grave; stood there, looking down upon the prostrate form, cold, pulseless, inanimate, with a tender yearning. That father had been the sorrowing son's ideal of all that was noble in presence, pure in thought, lofty in impulse, grand in intellect, chivalrous in action, manly, generous, knightly, beautifully gentle and brave.

Roland stood there; but he did not weep. He bent down and kissed the marble forehead, kissed the hueless lips now chilled by the icy touch of the great Annihilator.

Alice's bright-eyed, golden-haired boys stood awe-struck on either side of their father, aware that they were in the presence of Death, but scarcely conscious of the nature of the Eternal Separation which was to part them from the indulgent grandsire who had used to sport them on his knee, had made them wreath their little arms around his neck, had prized their caresses, fondled them with tenderness, romped with them on the lawn, riding them doubled astride his brawny breast, while he laid aside dignity, to forget in the joyous delight of domestic *abandon*, that he was a celebrity.

Vernon took these boys by the hand and led them nearer to the corpse, and in turn lifted each of them up to let them kiss the princely gentleman, who, even in death, smiled a wealth of benevolent love upon the world from whence he had gone.

"My little sons," said he in that subdued tone which proclaims a suppressed emotion—a tone that even these light-hearted children could translate, and which filled them with the deep pathos of awe, "your grandfather is dead. To be dead is to have to go away from the home that has known you,

from the sight of the friends who have loved you, from the associations that have clustered around you; and to become the tenant of a cheerless, damp, dark home in the Grave. To die is to pass away, to be forgotten, to be unmissed. I ask you, my sons, not to doom *him* to such a fate. Gather up the threads of memory and weave them with the woof of love into an imperishable fabric, in which to clothe your fancies, your aspirations, your lives; and the holy influence of his example, so preserved to your use, will be a panoply as invulnerable as Achilles' breast."

"If I live till you grow older," he continued, "I will endeavor to fill your minds with pictures of his life. If I die, you must obtain these from conversations with others. I want you to grow up to be proud that his blood courses through your arteries!"

Then Vernon swept his hand towards the portraits still hanging on the walls of the library, and added, pointing to a mirror at the end of the room:

"Look in that glass at your own images, and then at those portraits. Do you not see the close resemblance? The men of those portraits were gentlemen: Be like them in all things!"

Saying this, Roland Vernon, accompanied by his children, withdrew: The boys, to ponder with precocious thought upon his words. The father, to answer a summons which duty compelled him to obey.

The Jury had not yet agreed upon a verdict; but it was expected to agree that afternoon. Judge Ashe had sent to Vernon to say that he had better come into town, if he desired to appeal in the event of an unfavorable result. It was to attend to this matter that he prepared to go to the court-house.

When Vernon entered the bar about half past three, he was immediately besieged by a crowd of litigants in important suits in his own and adjacent counties, who made him exceedingly flattering offers of retainer, and these were so numerous, and the gratifying demonstrations of the popular estimation of his recent effort were so universal, that he was justified in anticipating an immediate career of lucratively successful practice in his profession.

In the meantime, Jane Blount had turned up in answer to an advertisement from Vernon; and her depositions, together with the document restored by Courtney, whose fit of spleen had ended in a day or two after his break with Roland, were likely to prove that Morrisson was the son of a sister of the Mary Morrisson for whose issue James Leigh had made provision, and that he had been foisted upon Leigh and his heir, as the illegitimate offspring of the *fleur pas* which the old gentleman had deplored so deeply and repented so completely—in which event Roland could recover from Morrisson, not only what he had paid him, but, also, whatever had been paid him during the life-time of Mr. Leigh. This with interest would amount to many thousand dollars—a fortune quite sufficient to restore the family to their ancient happiness and ease.

So it appeared that Fortune was to remain inexorable no longer; that the man of benevolence, virtue, and charity, infidel though he was, had at last attained, through good works, a prospect of reward for long suffering endurance.

Roland was within grasp of the goal of his ambition. His only lingering sorrows were the doubt as to Dolores' acquittal, and the loss of his father at the moment of his triumph.

While waiting for the verdict with extreme impatience, Vernon was approached by Jock Wright.

"So Paul Adams has cut out!" said Jock, after some conversation with his friend. "He was afraid the Sheriff would nab him if he staid. I say, Roland, how you did slash him!"

"Curse him!" replied Vernon, with a scowl of fury. "Curse him! I will hang him yet! Crime! crime! crime! His whole record is written in selfish deeds, duplicity, depravity, and crime! So he has run away? Where has he gone, Jock?"

"To Canada, I presume."

"Make way for the Jury there!" thundered the Sheriff, interrupting the discourse of the friends with his command.

They turned to behold the twelve march in and take their seats in the box.

The Clerk rose and called the roll; and,

having ascertained that all of the Jury were present, he added :

"Gentlemen of the Jury, have you agreed upon a verdict?"

The twelve nodded their heads.

Clerk (still standing).—"Who shall say for you?"

Jury.—"The foreman."

The prisoner was directed to rise and hold up her right hand.

Clerk (with *empressment*).—"Look upon the prisoner, you that have been sworn! What say you—is she guilty of the felony whereof she stands indicted, or not guilty?"

Foreman.—"NOT GUILTY!"

Clerk.—"Gentlemen of the Jury, hearken to your verdict as the Court has recorded it: 'The Jury says that Dolores Adams is not guilty of the felony of murder whereof she stands indicted.' So say you all?"

Judge Ashe.—"Mr. Sheriff, discharge the prisoner from custody."

During the arraignment a breathless silence was preserved in the court-room, and not a sound save the voices of Clerk, Jurymen, and Judge, was to be heard. The crowd stood spell-bound with intense interest and excitement. But the great heart of the sympathetic, easily-moved populace, impelled by a deep emotion, despite its strong original prejudices, gave a thump of joy, when the prisoner was released; and a wild shout rang through the Hall of Justice.

Throughout the proceedings commenced by the calling of the Jury, Vernon had been sitting like one dumb, gazing with an affrighted stare. When the crowd shouted, however, he sprang to his feet, and with a blazing eye glared around him, and then screamed, "SAFE! SAFE!" The next minute he seized a heavy court chair and hurled it with great power at the Solicitor; following this action with a chilling, horrifying, ferocious laugh.

THE SUCCESSFUL ADVOCATE WAS A MANIAC!

CHAPTER XII.

THE excitement of the trial, and the sense of responsibility which his connection

with Dolores' case had produced, sustained Vernon up to this moment. But when there was no further immediate requisition for the exercise of his brilliant faculties, when the almost invincible will had no further need of asserting its control over his mind, his intellect was immediately overthrown.

The mania was not of a sullen, moody sort; but, on the contrary, it was characterized with great violence.

Vernon was dangerous; and the asylum, the straight-jacket, the manacles, had to be employed, not only to insure the lives of the family at Rushbrook, but to prevent him from resorting to self-destruction.

Oh, horrible fate! Let us not pause to contemplate the shocking details! Let us shudder and pass on!

Cruel blow! Unfortunate stroke of malignant destiny! Its results were not only ruinous to the victim of the blighting insanity—they overwhelmed the whole of the circle from which Vernon was taken with crushing calamities.

The money raised by mortgaging Rushbrook fell due; only half of the sum—that part not claimed by Brown, who did not answer Roland's advertisement—could be paid; and the mortgagee gave the legal notice, and intended to sell.

The hope of recovering the money fraudulently claimed and received by Morrisson, died when Vernon lost his reason.

The determination to hunt down Paul Adams, to pursue the search for testimony against him, and to brand him with his crimes, could not be executed. Roland only possessed the clues to the evidence which existed.

Then Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Adams, Alice and her children, Dolores and her children, were left with no protection, all unused to the struggle with want, yet all plunged into extreme poverty.

How severe, O God! in thy chastisements!

One person rejoiced over the misfortune which produced this woe—one devil gloated—gloated, because Vernon's madness was his safety.

Paul Adams was glad!

He had taken refuge in Canada, whence

he wrote to a secret agent, and ordered the sale of his property, and had all his effects converted into cash, so that he might readily make further flight if Vernon should recover, and send the officers of the law to bring him to justice. Here he was informed after a lapse of several weeks, that Vernon's malady was pronounced incurable; and upon the reception of this intelligence—ineffably sweet to him, because it was at the same time an assurance of safety and a gratification of a long rankling revenge—he reposed in fancied security.

In this frame of mind, quietly and serenely, Paul Adams continued until the 10th of August, when he received a letter from his agent telling him that Vernon was rapidly recovering his reason, and that the physician to the Asylum had written for his wife and children to go to him, believing that a visit from them would hasten a restoration, and expressing the opinion that they would be able to carry him home.

Adams telegraphed to the agent to keep him posted every three hours by telegraph as to the changes in Vernon's status; and with this precaution, and his trunk packed, he waited—ready to make good his flight.

Once more it seemed to Alice, when she received the letter from the physician to the Asylum, which announced her husband's improvement, that Roland's sublime belief that violated law will vindicate itself—that right will prevail—was founded in wisdom and truth.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Alice Vernon was apprized of the prospect of her husband's recovery, she immediately hastened to him, taking both her sons—hastened with a happy heart and cheerful expectations.

The journey was made comfortably; and she sat in the reception room of the Asylum, waiting for the Superintendent, who had gone to announce her arrival.

Alice had nerved herself for the meeting, and mastered her emotions; still the yearning, passionate love, that she bore her

husband sparkled in her eye, and shook her frame with a tremor of anxiety.

"This way, Mrs. Vernon!"

The wife rose with her children clinging to her hands, and followed the physician. Her step was firm; she was braced for the interview; and was even prepared for disappointment.

"In there, if you please, Ma'am!" said the Superintendent, pointing to a door before which the party halted, after passing through a long corridor. "You will find Mr. Vernon prepared to meet you. He is perfectly harmless!"

Alice turned the knob and entered.

"My husband!—my dear, dear husband!" she cried as she bounded to his side.

Vernon sprang forward to meet her, and the eyes that had glistened with such an appalling light the afternoon of the rendition of the verdict, now beamed with a glow of love and gentleness, and the face whose contortions had been so horrible then was eloquent now with radiant joy.

"My sweet wife! My darling boys!"

And the husband and wife embraced.

Alas! The effect of this sudden transition from deep sadness to intense happiness, while not deleterious to Alice, was too much for poor Roland. He murmured a few blessed words of rapturous delight; and then his mind wandered again; and then—oh, torture of tortures to the wife!—he was convulsed with a new fury of insanity.

"Back, woman—back!" he cried.—"What! Do you come to mock my woe? Do you bring those children here to taunt me with my misfortune—to make them hate me because I have not provided for their wants?"

Alice screamed and fainted. The maniac paused, and a gush of tenderness followed his paroxysm of fury.

The keepers rushed in and seized him.

During all this time the children looked upon the scene with amazement and terror.

Alice recovered. Vernon was about to be taken away. He reached the door; he hesitated; he turned around and spoke to her:

"It has not been my fault, my wife, that I have failed! I have not been unwilling

to work for you and for them. But I started wrong—I tried to be honest and at the same time to succeed. I aspired to accomplish an impossibility!”

The keepers again tried to conduct him away. He hurled them from him. He advanced towards Alice.

She recoiled.

He stopped and sadly addressed her:

“Don’t let them be gentlemen! My grandfather on his death-bed made me take an oath to be a man of honor, and never to stain the reputation of the Leigh family. The attempted fulfillment of that oath has made me what I am!”

He laughed bitterly; and then seriously added:

“TEACH MY CHILDREN TO BE VILLAINS—THEN THEY WILL BE HAPPY!”

Alice again fainted. The lunatic was led from the room.

“Ma, sha’n’t we take poor Pa home?” asked the eldest boy when his mother recovered. “They treat him so roughly here!”

“Oh God! oh! oh! oh!” sobbed Alice in reply. “Oh, we shall see him no more.”

* * * * *

Adams’ faithful agent and detective ascertained the next day that Mrs. Vernon had returned home without her husband, and that his condition was more hopeless than ever.

This information was dispatched immediately to the murderer; and he relapsed into his accustomed serenity.

“Ha! ha!” rejoiced the villain. “I knew mine to be the best policy. This is the way that the Right prevails! Ha! ha! ha! He is a failure—the result of Honesty: I am a success—Brains!”

POSTSCRIPT.

(NOTE.—The Editor, when he originally undertook the labor of preparing the foregoing books for the press, had not anticipated the possibility of the pleasant changes which a few months have wrought, and had not expected to continue this narrative further than to the conclusion of Book VI. Fortunately, however, within the last week, a visit to the Vernons has supplied him with the facts related in the following Postscript. He congratulates his readers that circumstances have enabled him to end this story of Griefs, with the brief announcement that Sorrowing has been replaced by Rejoicing at Rushbrook.

NOVEMBER 10, 1868.)

B. R.)

TIME: October, 28th, 1868. SCENE: Rushbrook. DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: The Vernons and their Friends.

so long unpropitious, now smiles upon him kindly; while Prosperity, which had so long deserted him, is again at his side, a sworn friend.

Over the house-top, as of old; upon the many-hued leaves of the frost-touched trees in the park; flooding the vines and ripened corn in the background of the landscape; and making all Nature effulgent, as far as the eye could reach, the declining autumn sun poured its radiance of gladness and brightness.

Sunshine everywhere!

Sunshine! Even in that heart wherein deep Gloom had recently made its fixed abode—that heart whence Hope had taken its departure months ago—the heart of the lately miserable, but now happy, Alice Vernon.

Roland Vernon is back at Rushbrook!

In the home of his ancestors he once more reigns master. Better than this, even, his reason is restored. Aye! and Fortune,

Roland, as he was wont to do in the days of yore, stands beneath the shades of the cedar-arched avenue. Alice and her children are with him, looking serenely upon the picturesque scene that lies stretched beneath their gaze. All are silent. They are reflecting, perhaps, upon the horrible, horrible Past.

Look at Roland! Scan his features, as his eye, in quiet contemplation, sweeps the horizon! There is no trace of the shadow of unhappiness that used to darken his brow—there is no token of the old anxiety and sadness, which clouded the morning of his young life.

As the Husband, so the Wife—her face reflects the unalloyed joy of her heart!

As the Parents, so the Children—they too seem far removed from all thoughts of their late sorrows!

Indeed, the Picture is of complete Happiness!

But pause—Alice is about to speak. Approach! Listen! Her voice is musical with sweet symphonies of Hope and Love.

"My sufferings," she says, resting her thin white hand upon the shoulder of her husband, and looking down into the depths of his soul through his eyes, "my sufferings are amply compensated by the delight which your return has afforded. This joy fully repays me for all the misery which I have been compelled to endure. Now, we shall be supremely happy, because we shall be separated no more. Nothing on earth will ever induce me to let you leave me again. Life together; or Death!"

Roland clasps her to his bosom, encircles her slender waist with his arm, kisses her over and over again, and replies warmly:

"Aye, my precious wife! Life together; or Death! Here, hedged in from the world by the confines of our own domain, forsaking all worldly connections and all worldly ambitions, leaving all worldly battles for others to fight, we will abide together hand in hand. Honors! Applause! Fame! Mere rattles for grown babes—we shall not need them here to make us blessed. Social Obligations! Patriotism! They have cost us too much heart-wear already; they are luxuries that we cannot afford to enjoy. Away with all sentiments and passions, save love for each other and our children, and affection for the few tried friends whose tears have mingled with our own, and who have shared our joys. All else is Vanity!"

"I am glad to hear you speak so, Roland," replied the wife. "Your resolution approves my judgment; for I have so longed to live as your expressions indicate, although I have feared to communicate my thoughts, lest you might still desire to strive for the valueless prizes that lured you to effort in those dreadful days before—before your father's death."

"Foolish fear! No, no, my wife—the distempered dream is at an end! My ambition, save for the regard of those few that I love, and for the comforts of life, has left me forever."

"Thank God, my prayers are realized! You have the means to live now in quiet—but how very, very strange that circumstances should have so wonderfully combined to restore your fortune!"

"Strange! Strange, indeed, Alice! But do you know, dearest, that I have, as yet, received no information as to this favorable change—that I neither know its extent, nor the agencies through which it has been accomplished? Tell me, darling, of this mysterious restitution. Let me first hear from your lips the particulars of my good fortune. I remember very distinctly that Rushbrook was mortgaged to raise money; that only half of the debt could have been paid so as to cancel the mortgage, as twenty-five hundred dollars were expended in obtaining the attendance of the witness, whose testimony secured the acquittal of Dolores; that the mortgagee had a power of sale, upon thirty days' notice, unless the money was refunded by the first of July—I remember all this very, very distinctly. Then tell me how it happened that the dear old place escaped a sale?"

"It did not—it was sold!"

"And was bought by —?"

"Mr. Morrisson!"

"Well?"

"And he, with a great many professions of sympathy for us, and friendship for you —"

"—Refused to have our family vacate?"

"—No. Expressed his regret that he was compelled to request our immediate vacation of the premises. Your mother—we had vacated the premises the day before the sale—assumed her haughtiest manner, and told him that everything was *then* ready for his assertion of ownership, and wished him a lofty 'Good morning!' He retired immediately, and since then none of us have seen the old monster."

"Well, how did you regain possession?"

"Before the sale, several months, as you know, the State adopted a new Constitution, and Judge Ashe lost his office by the change. Well he came back to C—town to live, and resumed the practice of law. You were away, and, of course, we were in

great distress; so he was a frequent visitor at Rushbrook, and a counsellor in your absence. One day, while he was here, mother spoke of some curious manuscripts which she had found among your things—a letter from a woman by the name of Blount; an unsigned letter, dated, New York, referring you to this Blount woman; and a sealed package, marked 'The James Leigh Trust,' with, perhaps, a few others. Judge Ashe said that it was possible that they might contain valuable information, and mother gave them to him to read. He took them away, and we heard nothing more concerning them until about six weeks ago, when he came one day and said that the papers proved Mr. Morrisson to be heavily in debt to you, and to your grandfather's estate; and that Mr. Morrisson wished to compromise by paying ten thousand dollars in cash, and giving you the title to Rushbrook. Judge Ashe had been appointed your guardian, or something of the sort, by the Court, and had the power to act for you, but was unwilling to do so without consulting us. Mother and I advised him to accept Mr. Morrisson's proposition, and pledged ourselves to make it satisfactory to you upon your return. The end of it all was that we got Rushbrook, and the ten thousand dollars, and Mr. Morrisson got a release from his indebtedness. It was a great gratification to us to get back to Rushbrook; but, my precious husband, we were not happy until you returned, restored to health."

Roland tightened his embrace, gave Alice a kiss, and she proceeded:

"We found out afterwards that there was a John Morrisson, who died when a child, that was entitled to receive money from your grandfather, for some reason that Judge Ashe didn't tell us; and that the mother of that John Morrisson kept all knowledge of his death from everybody, but the Blount woman, and a sister who had a son of the same age. That son—the John Morrisson that we know—was passed off for the dead child, and got money that ought to have gone to the other. Judge Ashe ascertained this from the statements of the Blount woman; and, charging Mr. Morrisson with Fraud, and threatening to

expose him if he did not comply, he demanded restitution of all the money obtained through the subterfuge."

Alice paused. Roland glanced at her face and saw that she had something else to tell.

"Go on—tell me the rest!" he remarked.

"Well, you know," Alice proceeded, "'It never Rains but it Pours.' We had more good luck."

"More good luck! What was that?"

"Why, don't you know? When we came back here and had been re-installed for about two weeks, mother received a letter from a Mr. Fairchild in Vermont. The letter informed her that your grandfather—Louis Vernon, left an estate of about forty thousand dollars, when he died, which he gave by his will to his only daughter—Mr. Fairchild's mother. This estate, at her death, however, was to be divided between all of his heirs-at-law. She had just died, and, as most of your father's brothers had died previously, leaving no issue, you, as the personal representative of your father, were entitled to one third of the property. Since your grandfather's death, it has so much increased in value as to make your distributive share twenty-five thousand dollars. The money is not yet in Judge Ashe's hands; but he has taken steps to secure it, and says it will soon come into his possession. Wonderful, isn't it?"

"Wonderful! Miraculous!"

Roland uttered these exclamations; and then he pinched himself to test whether he was awake or dreaming.

"Besides this," Alice continued, "your mother has received a legacy of seven thousand dollars from one of her Virginia relatives—an uncle, or cousin, I believe, and a descendant of a brother of your grandfather Vernon."

"More wonderful. More miraculous!"

Roland drooped his head upon his breast and pondered deeply upon what he had just heard from his wife.

"Strange!" he said to himself, with a look of abstraction. "Very strange! There is no Chance! There is no Fate! Yet there is a great Law of Blood to constrain us and shape our ends!"

Alice interrupted Roland's musings:

"See," she cried, pointing to the gate, "there come Mr. and Mrs. Wright!"

"Who?" inquired her husband, with a start of surprise.

"Why, Jock Wright and his wife—Belle Woodruff!"

"Oh, they are married at last, are they? How well and how happy they look!—Why, Jock—old fellow, I am glad to see you—very glad!"

"And I, to see you, Roland," cried Jock, grasping his friend's hand. "How have you been? Well? Of course you have, though; for your looks tell the story. You are the same old two and six—. But I haven't given you time to speak to Belle!"

Roland welcomed his *soi-distant* sweetheart, gallantly congratulated and complimented her, and then permitted his friends to follow Alice, who now led the way into the house.

Entering the library—since the family's return to Rushbrook, this favorite haunt had been re-arranged as much like it was of old, as was possible—they were soon joined by Dolores, who was living with the Vernons, and the party sat down to chat over the many subjects that to them were full of congenial interest.

While the ladies rattled on pleasantly, Roland led Jock to a seat on a sofa at some distance from their wives, and, leaning down and speaking in a whisper, said, with some emotion:

"We will not talk of the Past, Jock—it is too full of unpleasant memories; but there is one question that must be asked, and now will do, as well as any other time, for the inquiry. I haven't dared to ask my wife, or mother; but you must tell me—what tidings have been heard from Paul Adams? Is anything known of the scoundrel's fate?"

"THE MISCREANT IS DEAD. Judge Ashe secured complete proof of his guilt as the murderer of his wife, and endeavored to have him arrested. He fled the country—went to Naples—was killed for his money and robbed."

While Roland and Jock were conversing, Dolores, who was sitting near a window which opened upon the park, hastily rose from her seat and left the room, Alice calling to her as she retired:

"What's the matter, Dolores—are you sick?"

"No; she's not sick. Let her alone!" whispered Belle, pointing to a gentleman, who was leisurely walking down the avenue towards the house. "Don't you see?"

"Oh, I didn't know he was to be back this soon!" responded Alice.

"Who is that?" inquired Roland, who had noticed the sudden retreat of Dolores and had overheard the comments of the ladies.

"Nobody but Mr. Silvertongue."

"Silvertongue! I wonder if it can be my old New York friend?" exclaimed Roland, rising to go out and meet him.

"Yes—the very same! But sit down—don't disturb Dolores!"

"Disturb Dolores!" echoed Roland.

"Yes! He's her beau!"

"Her beau! You are jesting, wife?"

"Indeed, I am not: They are engaged!"

"They are?"

Roland said this; and then gave vent to his astonishment in a prolonged whistle.

The gathering shades of twilight admonished Belle and her husband to start homewards, and they rose to leave. Alice accompanied them to the gate, where, in reply to some kind expression of Belle's, she said:

"Yes; I am very happy, darling. He is improved in every respect—in health, in spirits."

"Is he still an—an—" here Belle bent her head down and whispered the remainder of her inquiry in her friend's ear,—"an infidel?"

"I hope not, Belle—I hope not! But if he is, I do not despair of yet leading him back to the true source of all earthly Contentment—a faith in Christ's pledges."

"Oh, may you succeed! That shall be my constant prayer. Good-bye!"

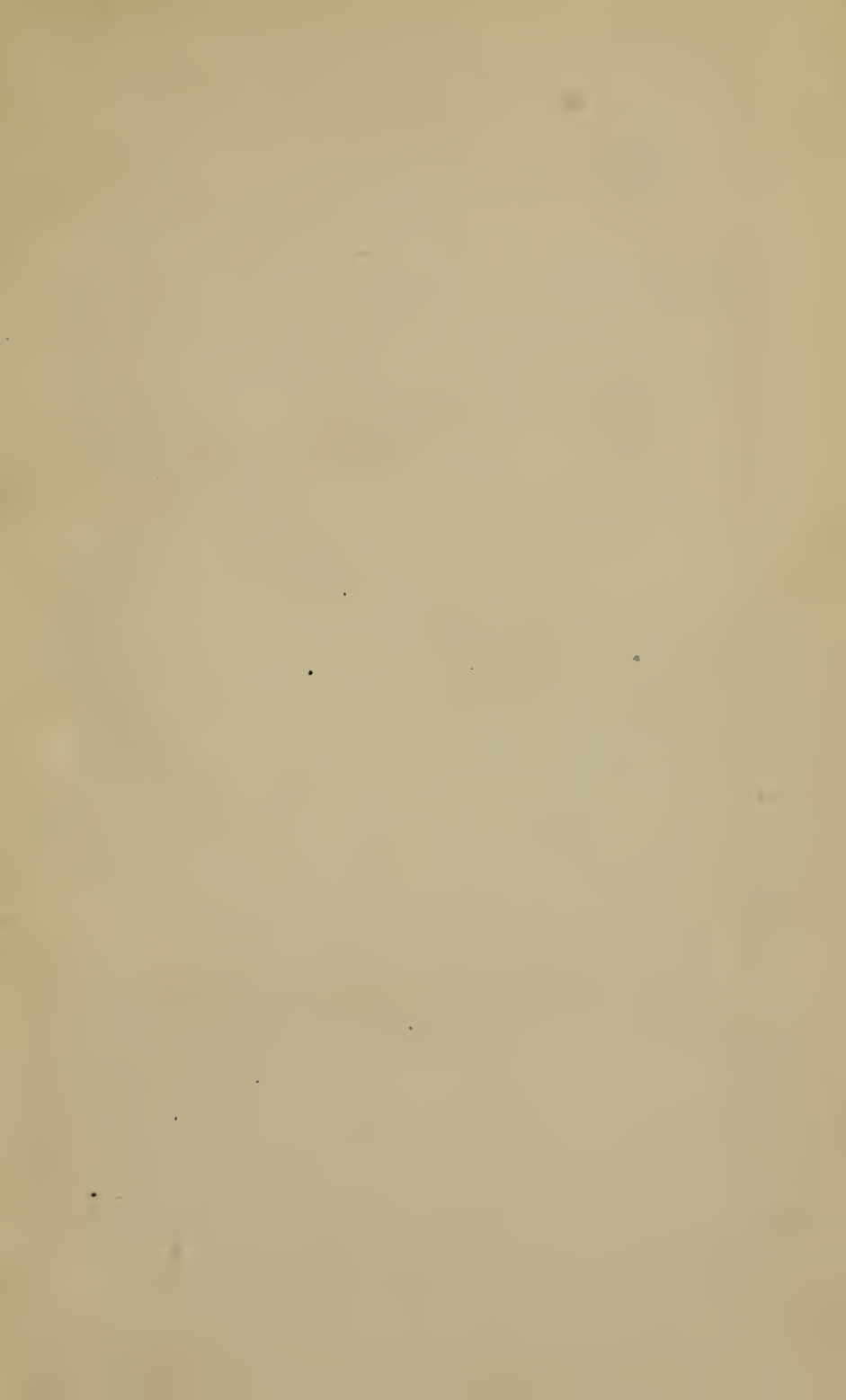
And so Belle kissed her hand and vanished.

The Editor closes his labors in the same words—addressed to Alice in her special work—to his readers in all their concerns:

"Oh, may you Succeed! That shall be my constant prayer. Good bye!"

And so he kisses his hand, and—Vanishes!

THE END.





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